AME SRD

Arcane Manifold Engine - System Resource Document

Version 1.2

As used in

The 23rd Letter, 3rd Edition
Shifters
Time Killers
Burning Frontier
The Iron River
The Resolute Society
Tales of Distant Lands
Xiongguo
Whole New World
MAJESTIC

Changelog

1.2.1 changed 2 page spread to singlepage
Clarified/standardised Harm rules

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MAIN SYSTEMS

THE FUNCTION OF THE SRD

This System Reference Document (SRD) exists to describe the core engine of play: how actions are resolved, how pressure and uncertainty are expressed, and how outcomes create consequences. It is not a complete game, a setting, or a tone guide. It is a toolkit.

The SRD is designed to be adapted, remixed, and rebuilt. Attributes, Skills, terminology, tone, and presentation are all expected to change from game to game. What should remain consistent is the underlying structure: Step Dice, Successes, Complications, and the conversation between players and Referee that drives play forward.

What the SRD Provides

The SRD defines:

- how dice are rolled and read
- how Successes and Complications shape outcomes
- how Mechanics can resolve Conflict
- how Harm is applied
- how magic, psionics and superpowers can be handled

These elements form the mechanical spine of the system.

What the SRD Does Not Provide

The SRD deliberately avoids:

- fixed settings or lore
- genre-specific assumptions
- exhaustive lists of traits or abilities
- prescriptive tone or narrative goals

Those choices belong to individual games built on the system.

The Real Currency of Play

Across all games using this SRD, the true currency is Successes and Complications. They determine progress, momentum, exposure, and consequence. Dice, Attributes, and Skills exist only to frame how Successes are earned and what Complications mean in context.

If a rule does not employ Successes or Complications, it is not core.

Freedom and Responsibility

The SRD grants designers and Referees broad freedom. With that freedom comes responsibility: to make deliberate choices about genre, tone, and consequence. Changing names or lists is easy. Changing what the game asks of the players requires thought.

Use this SRD to build games that know what they are about. Feel free to devise new mechanics which better emulate the genre and tone/look and feel of the game you're trying to build.

WHAT IS ROLEPLAYING

Roleplaying is a shared conversation. Each player takes on the role of a character in a fictional world, describing what they say, think, and attempt to do. One player acts as the **Referee**, presenting the world, its people, and its dangers, and describing how it responds to the characters' actions.

There is no winning or losing. The goal is to explore difficult situations, make meaningful choices, and see what consequences follow.

ABBREVIATIONS

PC Player Character
NPC - Non-Player Character
AME - Arcane Manifold Engine

In most roleplaying games, each **Player** takes on one character (PC, player character). The referee describes what the PC sees or experiences, but the player decides how they feel and what they do.

The Role of Dice

Most of the time, play proceeds through description and conversation. Dice are rolled only when the outcome of an action is uncertain, risky, and meaningful.

When a roll is required, the player describes their intent and chooses a skill. The Referee assigns an attribute based on what makes the action difficult. The dice then determine how the situation changes, not whether the character is competent.

Dice do not exist to punish players or to simulate reality. They exist to introduce uncertainty, tension, and consequence.

Each dice is considered separately and not added. The value on the dice is compared to the target numbers.

Tools and Equipment Needed

Character Sheets and Dice are the most basic items needed. Alongside this, pencils and erasers are recommended. The Referee should also have paper and pencils for their use; so they can sketch maps and help the players visualise situations.

Key Features of the Arcane Manifold Engine

The system was developed after decades of playing and developing systems. We've taken the best of what we enjoy and mixed it up into a system to suit a wide variety of settings.

Deadly and Fast

The system is faster than its ancestors, producing meaningful results without having to enforce re-rolls. The system is decisive, often deadly. Danger is something that cannot be ignored.

Flexible and Layered

As mentioned, the system is flexible enough to emulate many settings; from spy settings to superhero games. Variety and depth is added in layers. Attributes and Skills can be tailored to suit the game.

Player Focused

The centre of the game is the players and their abilities. The Referee handles all of the external influences and descriptions but the core of the game is how the players act and react to everything their character experiences.

Session Zero

Before play begins, the group should hold a **Session Zero**. This is a conversation about expectations, tone, boundaries, and safety.

During Session Zero, the group should discuss:

- the themes and subject matter of the game
- what content is welcome, limited, or excluded
- how the group will handle discomfort or distress at the table
- practical matters such as scheduling and communication

Groups are encouraged to use safety tools such as lines and veils, check-ins, or any other methods that help everyone feel comfortable and respected. These tools exist to support play, not restrict it.

Rule Zero

The Referee is the final arbiter of the rules and the fiction. When uncertainty arises, the Referee's ruling stands.

Rule Zero is not a license for arbitrary decisions. The Referee is expected to act in good faith, explain rulings when appropriate, and prioritise the shared experience of the group. If a rule conflicts with the needs of the table, the Referee may adjust or ignore it to preserve play.

A Shared Responsibility

Roleplaying works best when everyone at the table participates in good faith. Players are responsible for portraying their characters honestly and engaging with the fiction. The Referee is responsible for presenting a fair, challenging world. Together, the group creates the story.

Genre and Tone

The system is designed to support a wide range of genres and tones, from grounded drama to high-action pulp. Genre is expressed primarily through the choice of Attributes and Skills, how often dice are rolled, and how generously Successes and Nudges are awarded.

A tense, realistic game may focus on restraint, scarcity, and lasting consequences. A pulpy game may reward bold action, frequent Nudges, and rapid escalation.

Flexible Attributes and Skills

Attributes and skills aren't universal. They should be chosen, renamed, or adjusted to suit the genre. Pressure, competence, and failure are different in each setting, but the structure stays the same.

The Attributes and Skills presented in this book are designed specifically to support **The 23rd Letter**, a game focused on pressure, uncertainty, and consequence. They reflect the kinds of challenges characters face in that world and the ways in which those challenges resist easy solutions. Other games using this system may alter, replace, or reinterpret these lists to better suit their own genre and tone, while retaining the same underlying mechanics.

The Real Currency: Successes

Across all genres, the true measure of progress is **Successes**. Successes represent momentum, advantage, and forward motion under pressure. They are not guarantees of safety or victory. Whether the tone is bleak or heroic, Successes determine how the situation evolves and who gains ground.

Tuning the Game

Tone is tuned by:

- how often dice are rolled
- how harsh Complications are
- how freely Nudges are available

Adjusting these dials allows the same system to support very different play experiences without altering its core.

The 23rd Letter versus Other Genres

The 23rd Letter is grounded and gritty game:

- Pressure is emotional, social, and physical.
- Violence is crude and costly.
- Survival and repair matter because systems fail.
- Characters are fragile, hunted, and improvising.

A game about post-scarcity hedonists dealing with out of context problems would have different drivers:

- Pressure is ethical, social, and existential.
- Physical danger exists but is rarely decisive.
- Systems are reliable, but their consequences are not.
- Characters are competent, protected, and consequential.

Tales of Distant Lands is a game about wizards and communities in a novel fantasy world

- Pressure is societal and community-based
- Danger exists but is mostly externalised.
- Characters are competent, respected and responsible

Why This Matters

This comparison shows that:

- Attributes and Skills are **genre statements**, not balance tools
- You do not need new mechanics to support different fiction

Attributes by Game

The 23rd Letter	Post-scarcity Game	Tales of Distant Lands
Nerve	Agency	Body
Awareness	Awareness	Heart
Cognition	Intellect	Mind
Presence	Poise	
Mobility	Embodiment	

Skills by Game

The 23rd Letter	Post-scarcity Game	Tales of Distant Lands
Streetwise	Analysis	Primary Career
Insight	Persuasion	Secondary Career
Influence	Coordination	
Stealth	Exploration	
Technology	Engineering	
Athletics	Physicality	
Survival	Diplomacy	
Violence	Conflict	
Medicine	Care	
Repair	Systems	

Reading the Table

- **The 23rd Letter** focuses on fragility, concealment, and endurance. The language is practical, defensive, and reactive.
- The **Post-scarcity game** assumes capability and safety, shifting emphasis toward ethics, coordination, and large-scale consequences.
- **Tales of Distant Lands** is a highly narrative game which is as much about describing the world and your actions as it is about freedom.

The mechanics underneath are identical.

- Step Dice
- Success thresholds
- GM chooses attribute, player chooses skill
- Successes as the real currency
- Complications always matter

Example

A secure research facility holds information the characters need. Entry is possible, but risky. Surveillance is active. Someone will notice eventually.

The 23rd Letter Approach: “I need to get inside without being identified, grab what we can, and get out before this burns us.”

Skill Chosen: Stealth

Attribute Assigned: Nerve - the character is exhausted, frightened, and knows capture is catastrophic.

The Post-scarcity Game Approach: “I want access without escalating this or creating downstream harm.”

Skill Chosen: Systems or Engineering

Attribute Assigned: Intellect - the difficulty lies in understanding layered permissions and unintended consequences.

Tales of Distant Lands Approach: “I need to dissuade this Dragon from eating this village”

Skill: Wizardry (“I spent years poring over old texts in the Library”)

Attribute Assigned: Mind - the difficulty is in remembering the True Names of Dragons and making the connections.

Changing It Up Further

The system can be simplified even more if the genre demands it. Some games (like Tales of Distant Lands) may use only **three Attributes**, representing broad sources of pressure, and replace the skill list entirely with a single **Profession** or role that acts as a universal skill. In these cases, characters are defined less by granular capability and more by perspective, responsibility, or narrative position.

Even at this level of abstraction, the system functions the same way. Rolls still produce **Successes** and **Complications**, which remain the true currency of play. Attributes and skills merely frame how dice are rolled; Successes determine progress, and Complications shape consequence.

SYSTEM

Game Mechanics

Dice are rolled only when the outcome of an action is **uncertain**, **meaningful**, and **pressured**. If success or failure would not change the situation, no roll is required.

The system uses **Step Dice**, where attributes and skills are represented by a single die type (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and in rare cases, d20).

What the Dice Mean

- **d4 - Poor**
  You are debilitated in this area. When pressure hits, things tend to go wrong.
- **d6 - Limited**
  You can manage basic tasks, but stress quickly exposes your weaknesses.
- **d8 - Capable**
  You function well under ordinary pressure. This is a professional baseline.
- **d10 - Strong**
  You remain effective when situations deteriorate. Others rely on you.
- **d12 - Exceptional**
  You perform consistently even under extreme stress. Few people operate at this level.
- **d20 - Unnatural**
  This level represents abilities beyond normal human limits, usually the result of psionics, augmentation, or rare circumstances. d20 ratings are uncommon and often come with additional risks or consequences.

Higher dice increase the chance of generating **Successes (and avoiding Complications)**, but they never completely eliminate risk.

- Larger dice are **more reliable**, but never safe.
- Smaller dice fail more often, but even they can succeed in moments of luck or desperation.
- No die removes uncertainty. Pressure always matters.

The d4 Limitation

A **d4 can never score a 4 or higher**, and therefore cannot generate a Success on its own. Rolling a d4 represents acting from a position of weakness, ignorance, or disadvantage. To succeed when relying on a d4, a character must depend on other dice, favourable circumstances (which may modify the dice step upwards), or the use of **Nudges**, which allow limited intervention in a roll and are described later.

Making a Roll

When a character attempts a risky action:

1. **The player declares their intent** and chooses the **skill** that best represents what they are doing.
2. **The Referee assigns the attribute** that reflects why the action is difficult in this situation.
3. The player rolls **both dice together**.

This pairing represents what you are trying to do versus what is pushing back.

Reading the Result

Each die is read independently.

- A result of **1 on a die** counts as **1 Complication**
- A result of **1 on both dice** counts as a **Disaster.**
- A result of **5 or more** on a die counts as **1 Success**.
- A result of **10 or more** on a die counts as **2 Successes**.

- A result of 1**5 or more** on a die counts as **3 Successes**
- A result of 20 on a die, counts as **4 Successes.**

Outcomes

- **Disaster**
  Rolling double-1 means something bad has happened.
- **Complication**
  The action has introduced an additional challenge.
- **0 Successes**
  The action fails.
- **1 Success**
  The action succeeds, but no more.
- **2+ Successes**
  The action succeeds cleanly. The character achieves what they intended, within the limits of the fiction.

The Referee should describe results in fictional terms, not numerical ones.

Additional Successes

Any **Successes beyond the first** represent momentum, advantage, or efficiency. Spare Successes may be spent immediately to improve position, reduce exposure, gain useful information, shorten the time required, or limit the severity of a Complication. They do not make actions safer, permanent, or consequence-free.

Unspent spare Successes are lost unless it is an **Extended Action** Roll.

Each selection below may be selected only once.

Spare Successes may be spent immediately to:

- Haste: reduce time taken to complete the action
- Discern:gain additional or clearer information
- Inflict: add more Harm (usually equal to the Base Successes of the attack)
- Limit: limit the impact of a Complication, but not remove it entirely
- Sweep: avoid leaving obvious evidence
- Assist: assist an ally in the same scene

You may choose to change some of these effects. Perhaps in a more pulpy or dramatic game, Inflict may be chosen twice or more.

Example

*Marta is fleeing through a service corridor, trying to force a security door before her pursuers round the corner. She rolls **Athletics + Mobility** and scores **3 Successes**.*

- *The first Success forces the door open.*
- *She spends one spare Success to get through quickly, buying a few extra seconds.*
- *She spends the final spare Success to pull the door shut behind her, limiting how easily she can be followed.*

She escapes the corridor, but the chase is not over.

Complications

Regardless of success, rolling a 1 on any die introduces a Complication.

A Complication represents:

- lost time
- exposure or evidence
- increased pressure
- emotional strain

- future consequences

A Complication does not necessarily negate success, but it changes the situation.

This ensures that even competent characters accumulate risk over time.

The player can choose to negate the Complication by reducing one of their Attributes by one level.

Multiple Complications

If **both dice** in a roll show a **1**, the result is not merely a Complication but a Disaster **.**

A Disaster represents a serious failure, cascading consequence, or irreversible mistake. Something important breaks, is revealed, or is lost. The situation worsens sharply and immediately.

A Disaster may occur even if the roll otherwise succeeds (in games where additional dice are available).

Single Complication (one 1):

- Whatever you're doing, it takes longer than expected and closes off another option.
- You leave a trace: footage, witnesses, a digital log, or physical evidence.
- Someone notices something wrong and begins paying closer attention.
- You suffer pain, shock, panic, or exhaustion that carries forward.
- The next related action is riskier, noisier, or more constrained.

Disaster (two 1s):

- The situation spins out of control and draws immediate outside intervention.
- A vital asset is destroyed, revealed, or rendered unusable.
- Someone is seriously injured, captured, or publicly exposed.
- The opposition gains clear advantage and dictates the next move.
- A previously viable escape, refuge, or solution is permanently lost.

Success with Complication (1 Success + one 1)

- You achieve your goal, but someone notices and starts asking questions.
- You get what you need, but it costs you time you can't spare.
- You succeed, but leave evidence that can be traced later.
- You pull it off, but suffer pain, stress, or exhaustion that lingers.
- You succeed cleanly, but only by burning a contact or resource.
- You make it work, but the solution is fragile and will fail soon.
- You succeed, but the situation becomes harder or more dangerous afterward.

Extended Actions

Some actions, such as chases, building, surveillance, or escape, require **multiple rolls** over time.

Each roll:

- advances progress
- risks Complications
- narrows options

Extended actions always increase tension, never reduce it. The aim with an extended action is usually to score a bank of Successes against a number that the Referee has determined.

Example: Escaping Surveillance

The cell believes they are being watched. They need to confirm the surveillance and lose it without triggering an arrest. The Referee declares this an **Extended Action** and sets a target of **5 total Successes**. Each roll represents several minutes of movement, observation, and adjustment.

Roll 1

Action:
Blending into foot traffic while watching reflections and sight-lines.

Roll:
Stealth + Awareness

Result:
2 Successes, but a Complication from a rolled 1.

Outcome:
The character confirms they are being followed and gains early ground. However, the Complication means their trail is not entirely clean.

Total Successes Banked: 2 / 5

Roll 2

Action:
Changing routes and timing to break the pattern.

Roll:
Streetwise + Cognition

Result:
1 Success.

Outcome:
They reduce predictability, but it costs time. The Referee narrows options: one safe route is no longer available.

Total Successes Banked: 3 / 5

Roll 3

Action:
Forcing a separation through a crowded market.

Roll:
Stealth + Mobility

Result:
2 Successes.

Outcome:
They lose the tail completely. The surveillance is broken, but the Referee applies accumulated pressure: CCTV has partial footage.

Total Successes Banked: 5 / 5

Resolution

The Extended Action succeeds. The cell escapes immediate surveillance.

However:

- time has passed
- evidence exists, due to the Complication.
- pressure has increased

The situation has changed, but it has not become safe.

Opposed Actions

Opposed actions occur when two characters are directly working against each other and both outcomes matter, such as chases, struggles, interrogation, or deception.

Both sides declare intent, choose a skill, and roll simultaneously. The Referee assigns the attribute for each side based on the pressure they face.

Compare total successes:

- The side with more successes gains ground and achieves their intent.
- On a tie, the situation escalates; something gets worse or more dangerous.

Complications apply independently to each side and may occur regardless of who wins.

Opposed actions should always move toward resolution.

Example: Interrogation (Win)

A character is trying to extract information from a captured handler, who is actively resisting.

Both sides declare intent and roll simultaneously.

- **Character:** Influence + Presence
- **Opponent:** Nerve + Cognition

The character scores **2 Successes**. The handler scores **1 Success** and rolls a **1**, creating a Complication.

The character gains ground and extracts partial information. The handler's Complication reveals a nervous reaction the character can exploit in the next exchange.

If the exchange had tied, the situation would have escalated instead. Further rolls would continue until one side clearly gains the upper hand or the situation collapses

Example: Interrogation (Loss)

A character attempts to pressure a captured handler into revealing a safe drop. The handler resists, probing for weakness.

Both sides roll simultaneously.

- **Character:** Influence + Presence
- **Opponent:** Nerve + Cognition

The character scores **1 Success**. The handler scores **2 Successes**.

The character loses the exchange. The handler gives nothing and instead gains information, realising the cell is under time pressure. The Referee escalates the situation: the handler becomes more confident, and the risk of outside attention increases.

Extended Opposed Actions

Extended Opposed Actions are used when two sides actively contest one another over time, and the outcome depends on **accumulated successes**, not a single roll. Both sides roll repeatedly, usually over rounds, scenes, or intervals, until one side reaches the required number of successes or the situation collapses due to Complications or Disasters.

They are used for chases, pursuits, surveillance vs counter-surveillance, hacking duels, interrogations, debates, and tactical withdrawals.

These are also usually time-bound; a requirement to have achieved the desired target within a limited number of rolls.

How It Works

- Both sides roll using appropriate attributes and skills.
- Each roll generates successes as normal.
- Successes are added to a running total for each side.
- The first side to reach the target number of successes wins.
- Complications apply immediately and persist.
- The time limit is absolute and should spell Disaster if not achieved.
- A Disaster may end the contest outright.

Example: Extended Opposed Action

Situation:
A PC operative attempts to **lose a government tail** in a crowded city. There is a time limit as the government operatives start to swarm on the location. If the PC cannot escape within 5 rounds, then they'll be taken.

PC: Mobility + Stealth

Opposition: Awareness + Streetwise

Target: First to 5 total successes

Limit: 5 rounds.

Round 1:
PC scores 2 successes. Tail scores 1.
PC leads 2–1.

Round 2:
PC scores 1 success and a Complication: *leaves CCTV footage behind*.
Tail scores 2 successes.
Totals are now 3–3.

Round 3:
PC scores 2 successes. Tail scores 0.
PC reaches 5 successes first.

Outcome:
The PC escapes, but the Complication means the opposition may identify them later.

Assistance

Characters may **assist** one another when they are present in the scene and can meaningfully contribute to the action.

To assist, a player describes how their character helps and chooses an appropriate **skill**. The Referee assigns the **attribute** as usual.

How Assistance Works

- The assisting character **rolls one of their dice (their choice)**
- Each **Success** they score adds **+1 Success** to the primary character's roll.
- Any **Complication** rolled by the assisting character applies normally.

Assistance increases momentum, but it also increases risk. An increase in the number of dice in play always makes the chance of a Disaster increase.

Limits on Assistance

- Only **one character** may assist a given roll unless the Referee explicitly allows otherwise.
- Assistance must be justified in the fiction; vague or redundant help is not permitted.
- A character cannot assist if they are distracted, incapacitated, or meaningfully threatened.

Risks on Assistance

Assisting characters (Assistants) expose themselves to consequences. If the assisted roll results in a Complication or Disaster, the Referee may:

- apply consequences to the assisting character instead
- split consequences between characters
- escalate the situation more sharply due to multiple people being involved

Optionally, the Player whose character is being assisted may elect for the Complication or Disaster to be fully borne by the Assistant.

Measuring Time

The game does not track time in precise units. Instead, it uses three narrative measures: **Beats**, **Scene**, and **Watches**. A **Beat** represents a brief moment of action, lasting only a few seconds. A **Scene** represents a short opportunity measured in minutes, during which conditions remain unstable but workable. A **Watch** represents prolonged activity over several hours, during which fatigue, exposure, and lasting consequences accumulate. These measures exist to express pressure, not precision. As play moves from Beat to Window to Watch, options narrow and the cost of action increases.

Term	Approximate Scale	What It Represents
Beat	6-10 Seconds	A brief moment of action where events change immediately.
Scene	6-10 Minutes	A short opportunity where conditions hold long enough to act.

Watch	6-10 Hours	Prolonged activity where fatigue, exposure, and lasting consequences build up.
Day	24 hours	A full cycle of activity and rest after which the world meaningfully responds to events and long-term fallout becomes clear.

If a roll fails, it is common to require the PCs to wait the next time unit to try again.

> *For example, if they fail to pick a lock (1 Beat), they have to try again and it takes a Scene (6-10 minutes). If that fails, they may need to spend hours on it to try again, or they can look for a different path.*

One common use of a **Complication** is to increase the time required to complete an action by one level. A **Beat** becomes a **Scene**, or a **Scene** becomes a **Watch**.

One common use of a **Disaster** is to increase the time required by two levels. A **Beat** becomes a **Watch**, or a **Scene** becomes a **Day**.

If an activity is pushed beyond a **Day**, it is no longer something that can be resolved through immediate action. It becomes an extended effort that requires planning, resources, and narrative framing before further rolls are made.

Assisting

Sometimes characters work together to accomplish a task. One character takes the lead, while others provide support. This can sometimes be the difference between Success and Failure.

Core Rule

- One character is designated as the **Lead**.
- One or more characters may act as **Assistants**.
- The Lead builds and rolls their dice pool as normal.

Each Assistant contributes **one die only**, chosen from:

- A relevant **Attribute**, or
- A relevant **Skill**

This die is added to the Lead's dice pool and rolled together.

Resolution

All dice are rolled at once.

- **Successes** are counted from the entire pool, including Assistant dice.
- **Complications** (rolls of 1) from any die apply to the test, including those rolled by Assistants.

Assistants increase both the **chance of success** and the **risk of complications**.

Ownership of Consequences

If the roll generates one or more **Complications or Disasters**, the **Lead character decides** how those consequences are applied:

- The Lead may endure all consequences themselves, or
- The Lead may assign some or all consequences to one or more Assistants

This decision is made **after the roll is resolved**, once the outcome is known.

The group cannot avoid consequences entirely. They must be assigned to someone involved in the action.

Limits

- Each Assistant may only contribute **one die**.
- A character may not assist themselves.
- The GM may limit the number of Assistants based on the situation.
- An Assistant must be able to meaningfully contribute to the action.

Example 1: Breaching the Door

A group attempts to force open a reinforced door.

- Lead: Havel uses Fighting d8 + Vitality d8
- **Assistant**: Mara braces the door frame using **Vitality d10**

The final pool is: **d8, d8, d10**

The roll results in: 8, 6, 1

This produces: 2 Successes (8 and 6) and 1 Complication (1)

The door is forced open.

The Lead, Havel, chooses to assign the Complication to Mara. The GM rules that Mara strains her shoulder holding the frame steady.

Example 2: Investigating a Crime Scene

Ruò Xiànlǐng examines a crime scene while his retainer keeps watch.

- Lead: Ruò uses Investigation d12 + Wisdom d12

- **Assistant**: The retainer contributes **Awareness (Survival) d6**

The final pool is: **d12, d12, d6**

The roll results in: 11, 7, 1

This produces: **3 Successes** (11 counts as 2, 7 counts as 1), 1 Complication (1)

Ruò identifies the killer's method and likely escape route.

He chooses to take the Complication himself. The GM rules that in his focus, he contaminates part of the scene, complicating future investigation.

Optional Rules

These rules may be used to add nuance or adjust tone.

Risk Declaration

Before rolling, the Lead must declare:

- "I take the risk" or
- "We share the risk"

If I take the risk:

- All Complications must be assigned to the Lead

If We share the risk:

- Complications may be distributed freely after the roll

Skilled Assistance Only

An Assistant must contribute a **Skill die**, not an Attribute. This makes assistance more situational and prevents stacking raw Attribute dice.

Maximum Assistants

Limit the number of Assistants. (For example, 2) This keeps scenes focused and avoids excessive dice pools.

Chain Complications

If an Assistant's die rolls a **1**, the GM may rule that the Complication must be assigned to that Assistant

This reinforces the danger of poorly coordinated teamwork.

Assisted Failure

If a Complication (or Disaster) is rolled, this affects everyone in the group.

Failure under pressure can cascade across the group.

Nudges

A **Nudge** is a small, deliberate intervention in a roll that represents effort, luck, preparation, or pushing yourself past safe limits.

A Nudge allows a player to **adjust a die result upward** after it is rolled, potentially turning failure into success or disaster into mere failure. Nudges are limited, finite, and never free. Using one always represents drawing attention, accruing stress, or creating future consequences.

Nudges exist to prevent characters from being trapped by bad odds, especially when operating from weakness or desperation, such as rolling a d4.

A Nudge may be spent on any dice roll that occurs in the open. It may be used to support an ally or to interfere with an opponent, so long as the roll is visible and its outcome is not yet resolved.

A Nudge is a small, deliberate intervention in a roll that represents effort, luck, preparation, or pushing yourself past safe limits.
A Nudge allows a player to adjust a die result upward after it is rolled, potentially turning failure into success or disaster into mere failure.
See Nudges

What Nudges Represent

In the fiction, a Nudge might be:

- pushing through fear or pain
- acting faster than is wise
- sacrifice now for immediate gain

Nudges are not clever tactics. They are **strain**.

When Nudges Are Used

A Nudge may be spent:

- after rolling the dice but before the outcome is narrated
- to raise a die result enough to reach a Success threshold
- to mitigate a Complication (a roll of 1) by changing it to a 2.
- to mitigate the harshest edge of bad luck of rolling Snake Eyes (double-1) by raising a 1 to a 2, avoiding a Disaster .

Nudge Economy

In **dramatic, grounded games**, each character begins a session with **1 Nudge**. This reflects how rarely characters can afford to push themselves beyond safe limits. In this mode of play, Nudges are precious and their use should feel consequential.

Using a Nudge is a meaningful decision. It represents exhaustion, exposure, emotional strain, or burning something that cannot easily be replaced.

Pulp and High Action Play

In more **pulpy or action-forward games**, the Referee may increase the availability of Nudges. Common approaches include:

- granting 2–3 Nudges per session
- awarding a Nudge at the start of each major scene
- allowing the group to share a small pool of Nudges
- Allow unused Nudges to carry over to later sessions

This shifts the tone from survival to momentum, encouraging risk-taking and bold action.

Earning and Recovering Nudges

Nudges may be **earned back** during play, at the Referee's discretion, when a character:

- accepts a Disaster without mitigating it
- allows a failure to meaningfully worsen their situation

- takes a reckless or costly action consistent with the character's flaws

Nudges may also be **accumulated** across sessions in pulpy games, representing growing confidence or narrative momentum. In grounded games, unused Nudges typically do not carry over unless the Referee explicitly allows it.

Limits and Guidance

- Nudges should never be abundant enough to remove tension.
- The Referee is encouraged to be generous with consequences rather than with Nudges.
- If Nudges become routine, increase the cost or reduce their supply.

Design Intent

Nudges exist to ensure:

- d4s are not dead ends
- characters can succeed at a cost
- pressure accumulates over time rather than stopping play

They shift the question from "Can I succeed?" to "Is this worth what it will cost me later?"

The 5 Attributes

Attributes describe how a character holds up under pressure. They reflect emotional resilience, physical capability, perception, and presence rather than training or profession. Attributes are chosen by the Referee during a roll to express *why* an action is difficult in the current situation.

The attributes are:

- Nerve
- Awareness
- Cognition
- Presence
- Mobility

These are described in detail below.

The number of attributes depends on which game you're developing.

Tales of Distant Lands uses three Attributes:

- Body
- Reason
- Heart

but otherwise uses the same system.
Other implementations may use more "traditional" attributes.
Rise of R'lyeh uses

- STR (Strength)
- AGI (Agility)
- INT (Intellect)
- EMP (Empathy)

Nerve

Your ability to remain functional under stress, fear, interrogation, or psychic pressure. Nerve governs emotional control, self-regulation, and resistance to panic or collapse.

Examples:
Holding a cover story together during an aggressive interview.
Continuing to act rationally after a psychic backlash.

Awareness

Noticing anomalies, danger, surveillance, and when something in the environment is wrong. Awareness is reactive rather than deliberate, triggered when threats emerge or details slip.

Examples:
Realising you have been followed for several blocks.
Sensing something is off in an otherwise normal room.

Cognition

Reasoning, memory, analysis, and problem-solving under pressure. Cognition is practical thinking, not brilliance or creativity.

Examples:
Piecing together fragmented intelligence into a workable theory.
Planning an escape route while conditions are deteriorating.

Presence

How you affect others socially, intentionally or otherwise. Presence covers authority, charm, intimidation, and the ability to blend in or stand out.

Examples:
Convincing someone to help you despite their better judgement.
Making yourself seem unimportant enough to be ignored.

Mobility

Physical capability, reflexes, endurance, and movement. Mobility governs escape, pursuit, and surviving physically hostile situations.

Examples:
Sprinting through traffic to lose a tail.
Climbing, swimming, or forcing your way through obstacles.

The 10 Skills

Skills describe what a character is trying to do and how they approach a problem. They represent learned behaviours and practical experience, chosen by the player to express intent. Skills do not guarantee success; they define the method and the risks involved.

The skills are:

- Streetwise
- Insight
- Influence
- Stealth
- Technology
- Athletics
- Survival
- Violence
- Medicine
- Repair

The number of skills depends on which game you're developing.

Tales of Distant Lands uses a single Skill, called your Profession.

- **Wizard**
- **Sailor**
- **Warrior**

but otherwise uses the same system.

These are described in detail below.

Streetwise

Navigating informal power structures, criminal networks, favours, and the real rules of a place. Streetwise is about knowing who matters and how to approach them. Will also include city knowledge, understanding the flow of urban spaces and how to navigate crowds.

Examples of use:
Locating a fixer who can arrange transport using **Streetwise + Presence**
Avoiding a hostile gang's territory using **Streetwise + Awareness**

Complications:
You owe a favour you cannot easily repay
Your enquiries attract attention
You offend someone connected to your target

Insight

Reading motives, intentions, and emotional states. Insight detects instability and deception rather than facts. This is as much instinct as skill, but can be refined, however it is always limited by what the character can perceive.

Examples of use:
Identifying who in a group is lying using **Insight + Cognition**
Sensing fear or hesitation during a conversation using **Insight + Awareness**

Complications:
You misread intent and act on false assumptions
You reveal that you are paying close attention
The truth is more dangerous than expected

Influence

Applying social pressure through persuasion, intimidation, or leverage. How the influence is applied will alter the outcomes. This can be through conversation, coercion or even threats of violence.

Examples of use:
Coercing cooperation during questioning using **Influence + Presence**
Steering a tense negotiation under stress using **Influence + Nerve**

Complications:
The target resents you and seeks revenge

Your attempt hardens resistance
Word spreads about your methods

Stealth

Avoiding notice, managing visibility, and controlling how you are perceived in space. Stealth includes recognising surveillance while staying mobile, and is enhanced by the Tradecraft quality.

Examples of use:
Moving unseen through a secured area using **Stealth + Mobility**
Blending into a crowd to lose a tail using **Stealth + Presence**

Complications:
You leave evidence behind
You are noticed but not immediately confronted
You separate from the rest of the group

Technology

Using, understanding, and subverting modern technical systems. This includes the management of data, the understanding of complex systems like phone tracing or internet routing as well as computer hacking and programming.

Examples of use:
Accessing restricted data using **Technology + Cognition**
Disabling a camera feed under pressure using **Technology + Nerve**

Complications:
You leave a digital trace
The system flags unusual activity
Your access works briefly before locking you out

Athletics

Physical exertion, strength, and endurance. Athletics governs forceful, deliberate movement. Can be used to apply force as well as avoid harm.

Examples of use:
Forcing open a stuck door using **Athletics + Mobility**
Carrying an injured ally to safety using **Athletics + Nerve**

Complications:
You suffer exhaustion or minor injury
You make noise or draw attention
You drop or damage something important

Survival

Enduring hostile environments and deprivation. Survival is about lasting longer than conditions allow. This includes knowledge like how to keep people hydrated or how to insulate a house during a blizzard.

Examples of use:
Keeping a group alive while hiding outdoors using **Survival + Cognition**
Pushing through exhaustion and exposure using **Survival + Nerve**

Complications:
Supplies run low faster than expected
Someone becomes sick or injured
Your shelter or route is compromised

Violence

Improvised fighting, shooting and desperate harm. Any deliberate action designed to harm another. May be enhanced with multiple Qualities (Brawler, Melee, Archer, Rifleman, etc).

Examples of use:
Disabling an attacker in close quarters using **Violence + Mobility**
Shooting a pistol at an assailant using **Violence + Nerve**

Complications:
You escalate the situation
You injure someone more than intended
Witnesses or evidence remain

Medicine

Field medical care, trauma response, and stabilisation. Can also be used for counselling and, with Qualities, surgery and specialisations.

Examples of use:
Stopping bleeding after an attack using **Medicine + Cognition**
Treating shock under pressure using **Medicine + Nerve**

Complications:
The patient stabilises but worsens later
You use up critical supplies
Your actions leave visible signs

Repair

Hands-on fixing, building, and assembling under imperfect conditions. Repair creates function, not reliability. Can also be used for building things from scratch, assumes familiarity with appropriate tools.

Examples of use:
Changing a tyre quickly using **Repair + Mobility**
Barricading a door with scavenged materials using **Repair + Cognition**

Complications:
The fix fails at the worst moment
It works but draws attention
Structural weakness causes later harm

Skill Use

In general the actions of the player (or their declaration) determine the Skill and Attribute used, but the Referee may decide a different skill/attribute combination is better.

A common method is that the Player chooses the Skill, by their action and the Referee chooses the Attribute. This helps reduce attribute optimisation (skill fishing and dump stats) and allows the Referee to express danger and pressure more contextually.

If they express what they're trying to do, then the Skill choice is easy.

For Example:

Player: I'll replace the tyre. (a Repair task). So Repair and Mobility?

Referee: Hm, it's raining, they're close and you're rushing. Let's use Nerve.

Player: Oh fuck.

For Example:

A player might want to use their Cognition, but the Referee chooses Nerve.

"This isn't about being clever, it's about keeping it together."

A player might want to choose their Mobility but the Referee chooses Awareness

"This isn't about speed, it's about noticing in time."

Three Rules for Attribute Choices

1. The Attribute Must Be Justified in the Fiction

The player or the Referee must be able to clearly explain *why* this attribute applies to the action being taken. If the justification cannot be stated in a sentence, the attribute choice is invalid. This keeps rolls grounded in the situation, not the character sheet.

2. The Attribute Reflects the Source of Difficulty

The chosen attribute describes **what is making the action hard**, not what the character is trying to achieve.

- Are they panicking? → Nerve
- Are they rushed or injured? → Mobility
- Are they missing information? → Awareness
- Are they misjudging the situation? → Cognition
- Are other people the problem? → Presence

This is why the **Referee chooses the attribute**: they control the pressure.

3. The Same Action Can Use Different Attributes in Different Circumstances

There is no fixed pairing between skills and attributes. The same skill may be rolled with different attributes depending on context, environment, stress, and opposition. This prevents optimisation and allows the situation to matter more than the build. It can also differ between player characters.

Example of Skill Use

Situation Setup

The cell has been burned. Two unmarked cars are tailing them through wet city streets at night. One PC is driving, another navigating, a third watching the mirrors. This is already a **pressure situation**. No one declares “initiative”.

PHASE 1: REALISING THE CHASE

Trigger (Referee-facing)

The tail has tightened. Time to see who notices first.

Roll:

Awareness + Insight

Modify for Tradecraft

Outcome:

- Success: “You’re being followed. They’re coordinated.”
- Failure: The chase begins late. The first manoeuvre is harder.

Complication examples:

- You notice too late and lose a turn to react
- You clock the tail but misjudge how many cars
- You realise someone else in the car is panicking

No skills yet. This is reactive noticing.

PHASE 2: THE CHASE BEGINS (IN THE CAR)

Driver Tries to Lose Them

Declared action:
“I try to lose them through traffic.”

Roll:

Athletics + Mobility

Modify for Driver quality

Why:

This is about vehicle handling, speed, reaction time

Possible alternative actions:

Passenger calls turns and routes
→ **Streetwise + Cognition**

Passenger keeps watch on the tail
→ **Stealth + Awareness** (recognising surveillance patterns)

Someone stays calm under screaming tyres
→ **Nerve** check to avoid panic penalties

Success Criteria

The Referee sets the Chase total to 3, an (extended opposed roll). If the Players achieve 3 more successes than their opponents, they have escaped. If the opponents achieve 3 more successes, they have forced the players vehicle to a standstill.

The presence of two or more cars chasing the players means opponents can use the Assistance rules to gain the advantage on the PCs.

Complication

The Referee chooses one:

- You gain distance but run a red light (Success with Complication)
- You clip another car
- You’re forced onto a worse road

- The engine starts making a sound it shouldn't

The chase continues, but pressure increases.

PHASE 3: THE CRASH

The players are losing the chase and are forced to take a route where they cannot avoid a crash.

Crash Resolution

Check whether they have worn seatbelts (anyone shooting out the back of the car was plainly not).

Each PC rolls:

- **Mobility** to avoid injury
- **Nerve** to stay functional immediately after

Outcomes:

- Success: shaken, mobile
- Failure: stunned, injured, disoriented

Complication examples:

- Airbags deploy and block movement (Complication with Success)
- One PC is briefly trapped
- Smoke or steam draws attention

The car is dead, either jammed in somewhere or the engine won't turn over.

PHASE 4: ESCAPING THE WRECK

Immediate Decision Point

The pursuers are stopping their cars. Time pressure is extreme. Anyone still stuck inside is a liability and the players may have to decide to leave someone behind.

Action 1: Get Someone Out

Someone is stuck in the car. Maybe the seatbelt jammed, their door won't open or they were injured in the crash.

Roll:

Athletics + Mobility

Complications:

- You leave something behind
- You worsen someone's injury
- You are slower than expected

Action 2: Cover the Escape

Someone kicks the door shut, ducks behind wreckage, moves unseen. Being stuck behind cover is a short term solution when you're outnumbered. Either you have to move to escape or you have to go on the offensive.

Roll:

Stealth + Mobility

Complications:

- You're seen but not identified
- You leave a clear trail
- You split from the group

Action 3: Think Fast

Someone spots an alley, a service tunnel, a stairwell. How they communicate it to the others may reveal the direction they take. Others may be under threat as well; unable to traverse the distance without taking fire.

Roll:
Cognition + Awareness

Complications:

- The route is a dead end
- It forces separation
- It leads somewhere worse but hidden

PHASE 5: ON FOOT

Fleeing Through the City

Checking doors to see if they're unlocked. These can be the Chase rules all over again. Keep the pressure up and make it almost inevitable.

Roll:

Athletics + Nerve

Why:

- Endurance
- Pushing through pain
- Not panicking

Complications:

- Exhaustion sets in early
- Someone falls behind
- You make noise you can't control

Losing the Tail (If Possible)

A change of tactics might be to lock doors behind, find a great place to hide or use of psychic powers to hide progress (or maybe assist jumping from one building to the next)

Roll:

Stealth + Presence

Why:

- Blending, not vanishing
- Becoming forgettable

Complications:

- Someone remembers your face
- CCTV catches part of you
- You succeed but are boxed in later

OPTIONAL: FIELD FIX OR LAST DITCH MOVE

If someone tries something desperate:

- Hotwire a parked car
  → **Repair + Cognition**
- Barricade a stairwell
  → **Repair + Mobility**
- Treat a bleeding wound mid-flight
  → **Medicine + Nerve**

Each of these buys **time**, not safety. The group does not "win" the chase.

They survive it with scars, evidence, and consequences.

CHARACTER GENERATION

Character creation in AME is procedural and historical, not optimised.
Characters are shaped by what happened to them, not by abstract build choices. The process has four stages, each adding definition and constraint.

Overview of the Process

1. **Childhood Event** – establishes formative trauma or advantage
2. **Life Path** – determines age, experience, and erosion
3. **Archetype** – defines professional competence and approach
4. **Defining Life Event** – adds a final scar, bond, or obsession

Each stage primarily grants **Qualities**, with Attributes and Skills emerging indirectly.

STEP 1: Childhood Event (Formative Origin)

Every character begins with **one Childhood Event**, rolled randomly.

- This event grants **1 Quality**
- It explains where the character's core resilience, flaw, or fixation began
- It does not grant Skills or Attributes directly

Childhood Event (d12)

Each result grants 1 Quality.

d12	Quality	
1	Ambidextrous	"I was left handed but learned to do everything with my right."
2	Companion	"Buck here has been my best friend for years."
3	Cook	"My mom worked two jobs so I had to cook for my brothers and sisters."
4	Diver	"I grew up near a flooded quarry and we would swim all summer."
5	Fisher	"I remember going fishing with my Stepdad."
6	Gymnast	"I used to think I could be spider-man if I practiced enough."
7	Linguist	"My mom taught me, she thought it was important to communicate."
8	Mule	"I've always been big boned."
9	Pitcher	"I played catch with my mom and was an all-star in the Little League."
10	Runner	"Running is the only time when I really feel free."
11	Stable	"My grandma said I should always keep my mind when others lose it."
12	Total Recall	"I memorised a book when I was 9. What a waste of time."

Qualities gained here should be broad, enduring, and non-technical.

You may have to define the results on this table to fit your game.

STEP 2: Life Path (Age vs Experience)

The Life Path defines how long the character has been active. The player selects an **Age Bracket**, then applies the associated package.

This number of attribute increases should change based on the number of attributes there are.

Age Group	Attribute Increases	Skill Dice Allocation	Qualities
16–30	4	3 × d8, 3 × d6	1
31–55	3	1 × d10, 2 × d8, 5 × d6	2
56+	2	1 × d10, 3 × d8, 5 × d6	3

Optional SRD Notes

- Attribute increases are applied before Archetype modifiers.
- Skill dice may be assigned freely to any skills available in the game, subject to Referee approval.
- Qualities gained at this stage represent long-term experience, reputation, or accumulated scars rather than raw talent.
- No Attribute or Skill may begin above d12 unless explicitly permitted by the setting.

STEP 3: Archetype (How You Operate)

The Archetype defines how the character approaches problems, not who they are morally.

An Archetype provides:

- Skill Modifiers (steps up or down)
- 1 Archetype Quality (This may be unique or from the General lists)

Archetypes do *not* override Life Path or Childhood results.

Archetype Examples (Abstract)

- Operator
- Scholar
- Fixer
- Survivor
- Mystic
- Enforcer

ARCHETYPE: OPERATOR

Approach: Planning, execution, and controlled exposure in hostile environments.

Operators specialise in getting in, getting out, and leaving as little behind as possible. They are competent, prepared, and dangerous.

Skill Modifiers

- +1 Stealth
- +1 Violence
- –1 Presence

Archetype Quality

Tradecraft

You are trained in covert movement, surveillance awareness, and operational discipline.

- When attempting to **avoid leaving evidence**, **detect surveillance**, or **control your signature**, you may spend 1 spare Success to negate an additional Complication related to exposure.
- When a Complication involves being **noticed, recorded, or identified**, the Referee must describe what you did to mitigate it, even if it was not fully prevented.

ARCHETYPE: SCHOLAR

Approach: Analysis, interpretation, preparation under pressure.

Scholars are not weak. They are slow to commit and dangerous when allowed time. Pressure strips away their advantage.

Skill Modifiers

- **+1 Cognition-linked Skill** (e.g. Technology, Medicine, Insight)
- +1 Awareness-linked Skill
- –1 Violence

Archetype Quality

Deep Focus
When taking time to analyse a problem before acting, gain +1 Success on the first related roll.

ARCHETYPE: FIXER

Approach: Access, negotiation, favours, and informal power.

Fixers trade long-term stability for short-term solutions. Their problems accumulate off-screen.

Skill Modifiers

- +1 Influence
- +1 Streetwise
- –1 Stealth

Archetype Quality

Networked
Once per session, declare a plausible contact, favour, or back-channel that provides access, information, or temporary shelter.

ARCHETYPE: SURVIVOR

Approach: Endurance, adaptation, and refusing to break.

Survivors are not heroic. They are still here. Their Qualities often trigger Complications later.

Skill Modifiers

- +1 Survival
- +1 Athletics
- −1 Presence

Archetype Quality

Hard to Kill
The first time each session you would be Incapacitated, ignore it (operating as if they still had d6 in that Attribute) and remain functional until the end of the scene. Then they keel over.

ARCHETYPE: MYSTIC

Approach: Intuition, unseen forces, and dangerous knowledge.

Mystics are useful and unstable. They attract attention, whether they want to or not.

Skill Modifiers

- +1 Insight
- +1 Presence
- −1 Repair

Archetype Quality

Open Channel
You may interact with supernatural forces, psychic phenomena, or magical systems that others cannot perceive.

(This Quality is usually required for access to Magic or Psychic Talents.)

ARCHETYPE: ENFORCER

Approach: Direct action, intimidation, and controlled violence.

Enforcers simplify situations by making them worse quickly. They escalate whether they intend to or not.

Skill Modifiers

- +1 Violence
- +1 Athletics
- −1 Insight

Archetype Quality

Threat Presence
When you use Violence or Influence through intimidation, reduce resistance by 1 Success on the first exchange.

STEP 4: Defining Life Event (The Scar)

Finally, every character rolls or chooses **one Defining Life Event**.

- Grants **1 Quality**
- Represents the incident that still shapes the character's decisions
- This is often where tone is locked in

Example Outcomes

- Betrayal
- Survival against odds
- Moral compromise
- Public exposure
- Supernatural contact
- Irreversible loss

This Quality should be specific, personal, and story-facing.

STEP 5: Story Hooks

After character creation is mechanically complete, each character generates Story Hooks. These define who matters, what pulls at the character, and where pressure will naturally arise.

Story Hooks are not advantages, they are leverage points for the Referee.

Each character generates three hooks, chosen or rolled from the tables below:

1. Key Relationship
2. Driving Need or Flaw
3. Secret or Unresolved Truth

Hooks should be written on the character sheet in plain language.

STEP 5A: Key Relationship

This defines **someone who matters** to the character right now.

Roll **1d12** or choose.

d12	Relationship
1	A dependent who relies on you to survive
2	A former ally you betrayed or abandoned
3	A mentor whose approval you still seek
4	Someone who believes you owe them
5	A rival who knows how you think
6	A loved one kept at a distance for their safety
7	A professional partner you don't fully trust
8	Someone who thinks you are dead or gone
9	A person who knows your worst moment
10	Someone you failed when it mattered
11	A handler, patron, or sponsor with expectations
12	Someone who should hate you but doesn't

Guidance

- Give the relationship a **name**
- Decide whether they are **nearby, distant, or missing**
- The Referee is encouraged to bring this person into play early

STEP 5B: Drive or Flaw

This defines **why the character keeps going**, or what consistently undermines them.

Roll **1d12** or choose.

d12	Drive or Flaw
1	You cannot walk away from unfinished business
2	You need to be needed
3	You fear becoming irrelevant
4	You distrust authority even when it helps
5	You push yourself past safe limits
6	You avoid emotional confrontation
7	You seek control when stressed
8	You crave recognition or validation
9	You take responsibility for things you can't fix
10	You numb yourself rather than process trauma
11	You believe survival justifies compromise
12	You are afraid of what happens if things slow down

Guidance

- This hook should create bad decisions under pressure
- The Referee may offer **Nudges** when a player leans into their flaw
- Ignoring this hook should feel like a missed opportunity, not a punishment

STEP 5C: Secret or Unresolved Truth

This defines **something hidden**, unfinished, or unspoken.

Roll **1d12** or choose.

d12	Secret
1	You were responsible for someone's death
2	You survived something others didn't
3	You lied about your past to gain access or trust
4	You are being watched or monitored
5	You compromised someone else to save yourself
6	You are afraid you enjoyed what you did
7	You carry evidence that could destroy someone
8	You are not who you claim to be
9	You made a choice that cannot be undone
10	You owe a debt you can't repay cleanly
11	You know the truth about an important event
12	Something followed you back from elsewhere

Guidance

- The player decides **who knows**, if anyone
- The Referee decides **when it surfaces**
- Secrets are not twists; they are **time bombs**

Optional SRD Rule: Hook Pressure

When a Story Hook directly complicates a scene, the Referee may:

- Introduce a Complication without a roll
- Offer a **Nudge** if the player accepts the complication

- Escalate stakes faster than normal

This keeps Story Hooks mechanically relevant without turning them into currencies.

Optional Variant: Shared Hooks

For tighter party cohesion, the Referee may require:

- One shared relationship
- One shared secret

Examples:

- A failed operation
- A missing person
- A cover-up
- A shared betrayal

This creates immediate interdependence.

Final Character Summary

At the end of character generation, a typical AME character will have:

- 3–5 Qualities
- Competence shaped by age, not optimisation
- Clear vulnerabilities
- At least one unresolved pressure

The character sheet should already contain **story hooks and fault lines**.

Experience

The topic of experience is often contentious. Within AME, we are misery with experience. We don't think that adventuring should provide a more thorough education and opportunities for growth than dedicated training and study.

To this end, we recommend the maximum amount of experience given out should be 3 points.

The player gets a single point for attending the session.

The player gets a second point for standing out within the session. This can be from being heroic or helpful or taking the lead.

The player may receive a third point for conspicuous heroism or considerable sacrifice.

You can use your experience points to learn or improve skills and buy qualities. Experience can only be spent during "downtime", when the players are feeling secure or having opportunities to rest.

Skills

To learn a new skill, the player must purchase the skill at the level d4. The cost of a new skill is 20 experience (4 times d4)

To increase the skill, the size of the dice multiplied by 2 must be spent. To go from d4 to d6 requires 12 experience. To grow from d6 to d8 therefore costs 16 experience.

Qualities

Learning a new Quality costs 10 experience but requires a teacher or learning source or a suitable event. If a teacher is used, the teacher must succeed at an appropriate roll (Teaching, Persuasion or perhaps a skill roll). If they fail, the player does not get their Quality.

For example, spending a week in a military camp might enable a character to gain a military Quality even without a specific teacher.

Attributes

Attributes cannot normally be increased without a specific and suitable event. Attribute increases cost 20 points per level, and must have a narrative or story component.

Resolutions

If through play the Character resolves a flaw or dark secret or other narrative or descriptive trait, the Referee may choose to award additional experience points or award the Player Character with a Quality, Skill Increase or Attribute Increase.

Optional SRD Rule

If you think the experience offerings are miserly, feel free to increase them.

CONFLICT

Everyone can do two things within a single Turn in a Round; these are known as the Slow Action and the Fast Action. A Slow Action can be turned into a Fast Action (meaning the player gets two Fast Actions). A Reaction (such as to an attack) is a Fast Action that occurs out of turn sequence, but the player must have a Fast Action available that turn.

Slow Actions include:

- Any type of attack*
- Any type of movement while prone
- Climb or jump
- Reload a weapon
- Most skills used, e.g. Influence, Medicinee

Fast Actions include:

- Aiming a weapon
- Any Defensive action or reaction
- Taking an aimed shot*
- Movement while standing up
- Stand up from prone
- Take cover
- Change weapons
- Pick up an object

*if a player has declared their Fast Action in the previous Round is to Aim, they may take the shot in the following turn as their Fast Action as long as they are not attacked in the interim.

Initiative

In many cases, the narrative will dictate initiative. The players may be surprised or they may be laying a trap. Otherwise the player will have to declare before they roll they are "seizing the initiative". Initiative is usually in combat situations by may also be relevant separate from combat.

Caught by Surprise

If one side of a conflict is surprised (such as in an ambush) then all of their rolls are at -1. Anyone who drops lower than d6 for the Skill+Attribute combination may choose not to act at all. They will have to wait until the next Round so they can act as normal in their Turn.

Setting an Ambush (usually Cognition + Stealth) Successes may be used to counteract attempts to detect the ambush (usually Awareness + Insight or Stealth).

Seizing the Initiative

Players may declare they are taking the Initiative by pre-emptively spending a Success from the roll they are about to make. When they roll, one Success is subtracted from their total but they go first. This can mean if they fail the roll or only get a single Success, they are failing to act that turn.

> *For Example: Jim, the team TK, encounters a guard, who immediately goes for his gun. Jim decides to Seize the Initiative before he rolls. He rolls his Telekinesis dice, getting two Successes. As Jim spent one of his Successes on Initiative, his action goes first. A single Success for his Psychokinesis may not be sufficient to prevent the guard drawing the weapon but he may use it to poke the eye of the guard, putting off his aim. He desperately tries for that, causing a -2 dice modifier for the guard's Nerve + Violence roll.*

Non-Violent Initiative

Initiative can also be used for non-Violence ends.

> *For Example: A guard is trying to reach a gun on the floor and Sandra's PC, Marko, is attempting to reach it first. By default, both of them roll Mobility and Athletics to attempt to get there. If she spends a Success before rolling, Marko will definitely get to the gun first. However if she gets less than two Successes on her roll, she won't get it all.*

Fighting

When attacking in close combat, use the Fighting skill. You have to be in the same Zone as your target (see Zones below). Cover doesn't defend against Fighting attacks.

For your game, you might want to add 1 Harm for every extra Success after the first. This allows very highly skilled (and high rolling) characters to inflict a lot more Harm

Harm

If your attack succeeds, you inflict the base Harm of the weapon. Add another Base Harm if a Success is allocated to Harm. Take into account the effects of armour. If your resulting damage total is greater than the standard Critical Threshold (3), you score a Critical!

Hand to Hand attacks can be Blocked and Dodged (see Defensive Actions) with each Success reducing the effectiveness of the attack by 1. If the number of Successes is reduced to zero, the attack fails.

Grapple

Grappling is treated as a normal Fighting roll - where the responses are either Block, Dodge or Grapple. While the first two work normally, Grapple is meeting the offensive move with offensive moves. Both make Fighting rolls and compare the number of successes gained. Whomever wins the Grapple inflicts 1 point of Harm (plus extra based on the number of spare successes).

Shoving

As a Fast Action it's possible to shove or trip another character in the hope they fall. This fall is unlikely to cause Harm (unless the target Pushes their roll and fails badly). Both attacker and defender roll their Fighting or Force skill, and if the attacker wins, the defender falls to the ground. If the defender wins the challenge, nothing happens though the defender will obviously be aware of the attempt.

Diving Blow

A diving blow is a commitment to the attack that requires your whole action and ability to move. If successful, you do a normal attack with a +2 dice modifier and both the attacker and defender are now Prone. If the roll fails, the attacker misses and is Prone.

Shooting

The basis of Shooting is pointing a weapon, rolling your Shooting dice and applying the result. You must have line of sight to your target (though firing into soft cover or smoke is permissible).

Harm

If your attack succeeds, you inflict the base Harm of the weapon. Add another Base Harm if a Success is allocated to Harm. Take into account the effects of armour. If the resulting damage is equal to the Critical Threshold (3), a critical hit is achieved.

Remember that Thrown Weapons use the Mobility skill rather than Shooting.

For your game, you might want to add 1 Harm for every extra Success after the first. This allows very highly skilled (and high rolling) characters to inflict a lot more Harm

Aiming

Before firing, a Fast Action should be spent to aim. If this is skipped then the Quick Shot penalty applies. This is -1 for pistols, submachine guns and carbines. All other ranged weapons get a -2 penalty. If you have any sight better than iron sights, you get a +1 to hit. If using telescopic sights (on a rifle), you get +2 to hit.

If you do any other action after you shoot, you lose aim. However if you maintain position and perform no other actions you can take a normal shot in your Slow Action and an additional shot in your Fast Action.

Called Shot

By default, any shot will roll on the Hit Location table below, but if the attacker wishes to deliberately target a part of the body, the Small Target modifier (-2) applies.

This may be to force the target to drop an item or weapon or perhaps try to deliberately target an area they see as un-armoured (for maximum effect) or the opposite, hit armour to lessen the impact of a strike, demonstrating their skill.

Movement and Range

A violent conflict is typically played out in a particular location where your characters happen to find themselves fighting for their lives. Whether there is a drawn or printed map of the location will depend on the Referee, the scenario, and the group's preferences, but either way the location will be divided into zones. A zone is typically a room, a corridor, or an area of ground. If the location is mapped, use a hex grid where each hex is approximately 10 metres. How big a zone is can vary, as a zone is generally smaller in a cramped environment than in open terrain. However, as a rule of thumb, a zone is approximately 10m wide and/or 10m long. Zones also apply for vertical positions as well (for flying creatures or vehicles). Lastly, zones are also usable outside of conflict; being in a different zone it can be assumed that people can't hear you whisper.

Movement

Each character can move 1 zone per fast action. If they decide to sprint, they may roll Mobility and get an extra zone for each success. Moving 5 zones in a turn is fast! If they convert their slow action to a fast action, they can roll Mobility again and get up to another 5 Zones!

Range

All actions within combat are counted in zones (or hexes). If you are in the same hex as an opponent, you may engage them in Melee combat. If you have ranged weapons, you can engage any enemy you can see, subject to range modifiers for the weapon.

Each weapon has a range in zones. This is the Short Range of the weapon and commonly incurs no penalty. Medium Range is twice Short Range (2*SR). Long Range is twice Medium Range (4*SR). Extreme Range is twice Long Range (8*SR).

Range	Modifier	Short Range multiplier
Short	0	1x
Medium	-1	2x
Long	-2	4x
Extreme	-3	8x

The Referee may decide if a longer range can be achievable and, separately, effective.

Conversely, shooting at people who are at Point Blank range (in the same hex) may incur a penalty. Pistols and Sub-machine-guns get a -1, Rifles and other long-arms get a -2.

Attacking

On their turn, characters may make an attack, as long as they are within range (or appropriate range modifiers are used), they have the ammunition if making a ranged attack, and have enough actions and are not otherwise engaged.

All attacks and conflicts are handled the same way.

To engage in conflict with another requires a contest of skills. For physical fighting, this is . For persuasion and intimidation, this is Interaction. For sneaking up on someone, it would be Mobility versus their Perception.

First, declare the action. Then roll for the action. If Successful, apply the effects of the action.

The winner of any contest is whomever scores the most Successes.

FIGHTING & SHOOTING

When Sighting or Shooting, the Harm inflicted by a successful attack is listed in the table below. If you score additional successes, you can add additional Harm or choose other effects, with Referee agreement.

> Example: Lena shoots at a Cinder Dog with a pistol. She rolls and gets two Successes. The base Harm of a Pistol is 2. Because of her extra Success she was able to apply the Harm twice, inflicting 4 Harm to the creature.

There are modifiers for different situations but for simplicity, we apply the following difficulty modifiers. These modifiers are all cumulative.

Mod	Ranged Weapons	Visibility	Other
+1	Close	Illuminated	Aim
0	Short (same zone)	Daylight	
-1	Medium (2x SR)	Fog/Rain	Target Moving
-2	Long (4x SR)	Darkness/Heavy Rain	Small Target
-3	Extreme (8x SR)	Dense Smoke	Target Flying

Range modifiers are based on the RNG of the weapon. Each is measured in zones (approximately 10 metres).

Defence

If you have a Fast or Slow Action available, you can choose to Defend against any incoming attack you're aware of. With most ranged attacks, the target is not aware. Defences may be

- **Parry/Block** - the defender must make a Successful attack with an appropriate method (for example, you can block a punch with a unarmed block, but blocking a sword with an unarmed strike is not advised) and score equal or more successes than the attacker.
- **Dodge** - you can choose to dodge any attack that you are aware of. Roll Mobility and each success reduces the attackers successes by one. By default, after a dodge you are prone, spend an extra success to remain on your feet.

For active defence you can turn your Slow Action into two Fast Actions as long as you do nothing but defend.

Automatic Fire

Ammo Dice are extra dice you can use to bolster your attack, increasing the Harm inflicted or the number of targets engaged. Each Success on the Ammo Dice represents an additional target engaged (with a single hit) or full additional hit (with full Harm) on the desired target. All targets must be in the same zone.

You get one Ammo die for the Auto rating on your weapon. You can choose to shoot fewer. If you roll a Complication on any dice during your Automatic Fire, you run out of ammunition,

The dice used depend on the Range.

Short Range	d10
Medium Range	d8
Long Range	d6
Extreme Range	d4

Suppression

Firearms can also cause Suppression on targets. If you are hit by enemy fire - even if no Harm was done because of Armour or Cover, you may be Suppressed. You must make an immediate MIND roll. If you fail, you are Suppressed, you are forced to drop prone and lose both actions next turn. The following turn you may recover unless you are Suppressed again.

Explosives

Explosions are rated from d20 to d6, where d20 is the most powerful - this is known as the Blast Intensity. This effect is within the same zone as the explosive. Each zone away from the epicentre of the blast reduces the effect by 1 level. Once it reduced beyond d6, the explosion has no further effect.

When it explodes, roll two dice of the Blast Intensity. Any success causes Harm and additional successes cause additional Harm. Anyone caught in the blast area is automatically Suppressed. Only cover may protect from this. If the target is already prone, the Blast Intensity is reduced by 1 step.

Other Sources of Harm

Poisons and Disease

If you suffer 1 point of Harm from a source that may be diseased or poisoned, you must be attended by someone who knows of the infection or poison.

Poisons and infections have an Intensity (d20 - d6) which cause injury. The normal type of poison (with lethality) forces the player to make an Opposed Roll against FLESH. If they fail, they take 1 point of Harm to FLESH until they are Incapacitated (0). Once incapacitated, they make another HEART roll against the Poison intensity and if they fail, they die. Without an antidote, they will be forced to make another HEART roll every Stretch (5-10 minutes).

Some poisons don't kill you, they just cause Paralysis or Unconsciousness. If the opposed roll fails, the effect is received.

Infection operates the same way except they can make a FLESH roll every Day and if they pass, the infection passes and the character is no longer sick. Antibiotics add a +2 to this roll.

Cold

When the cold is bitter and you don't have adequate clothes or shelter (Referee's discretion), you must roll FLESH at regular intervals. The colder it is, the more frequently you need to roll.

A chilly fall day requires a roll per day – in winter, you might have to roll once every shift or even every stretch in extreme conditions. Extra protection, like a blanket, can give a bonus to your roll.

If you fail, you become hypothermic and suffer one point of Harm to FLESH and one point of Harm to MIND or HEART. You also cannot heal naturally. You must keep rolling for FLESH at the same interval, suffering more Harm and stress each time you fail. If you are incapacitated while hypothermic, you die the next time you need to roll. Only after you have warmed up, if only by a campfire, are you able to heal again.

Starvation

You must eat a ration of food at least once every day. After a day without food, you starve. When starving, cannot heal. You also suffer one point of Harm per week. If you are broken while Starving, you die after another week without food. As soon as you have eaten, you are no longer starving.

Dehydration

You must drink a ration of water every day. After a day without water, you become dehydrated. While dehydrated you cannot heal in any way. You take 1 point of Harm every day and if you are incapacitated, you die after one more day without water. As soon as you drink, you are no longer dehydrated.

Sleep Deprivation

You need to sleep for at least one shift each day. After one day without sleep, you cannot heal. If you are incapacitated while sleep deprived, you collapse and sleep for at least one shift, and are unable to wake up during that time. As soon as you have slept for at least a shift, you are no longer sleep deprived.

Drowning

Unless specifically mentioned, all player characters can swim. In rough seas or when in water for extended periods of time, players need to make a Mobility roll to stay afloat with failure meaning they sink. Every turn under the water requires a FLESH roll or 1 point of Harm will be incurred. If the player character is incapacitated while in the water (due to drowning or other Harm), they will need to make an immediate FLESH roll every round or they drown. After a Stretch underwater and incapacitated, the character dies. Only by being brought to shore before this time, and medical care administered will recovery be possible.

Fire

Fire, like poisons and explosions, is rated in Intensity d20 - d6 and two base dice of the intensity are rolled. For every success rolled by the Fire, one point of Harm is taken. This happens every turn unless the fire is doused (requiring a Mobility roll opposed by the Fire Intensity). Using a blanket gives a +1 modifier to your roll.

HIT LOCATIONS

When receiving an injury, it can be useful to roll a location, particularly if Armour plays a role (helping reduce the chance of a Wound.)

d6	Location
1	Head
2	Right Arm
3	Left Arm
4	Torso
5	Right Leg
6	Left Leg

Called Shots mean the table above is ignored.

For your game, you may wish to have a Critical Table that changes depending on body location rather than type of attack or targeted attribute.

INJURY

Each weapon has a Harm score. This is the amount of Harm inflicted for every Success allocated to it.

This Harm is applied to the Attribute of the recipient of the Harm, according to their players choice (though some forms of Harm may specify which Attribute it targets).

Once the Attribute has been reduced to d4, it will be functionally unable to assist. When an attribute is reduced to 0, the character is incapacitated (unable to move, speak, act) for the remainder of the Scene unless revived.

This Harm heals after a full 8 hours rest without moving (sleep is the usual method)

> Example: Ryan is punched hard by Lena and receives two points of Harm. He has Flesh d8, Mind d8 and Heart d10. If he takes the Harm on his Flesh or Mind, he will be reduced to d4. But if he takes it on Heart, he'll only be reduced to d6 - debilitated but still able to make rolls. After a full nights sleep (1 Watch), he will be back up to full health, attributes healed.

If the amount of Harm received is 3 or more, after the effects of Armour have been applied, a Critical Injury has been inflicted.

Short Term Recovery (being revived)

If someone is reduced to 0 and is incapacitated, an appropriate Medical/First Aid roll can be made once for them. The number of Successes on the roll indicate the number of attribute levels received back. They can spread these across their attributes as required.

> Example: Ryan took the punch and reduced his Flesh to d4. He's not unconscious but a First Aid roll with 1 Successfrom James allowed him to regain a single Attribute level, which he allocated to his Flesh, raising it to d6. He's back in the game.

Optional SRD Rules

These healing rates may be changed depending on your game. The rules presented a what we consider to be drama-appropriate. Your game may rule that only one Attribute is healed per Watch of rest.

CRITICALS

Below is a selection of Critical Tables ranging from “vague” tables like Flesh, Heart and Mind to tables that go into the type of weapon (Piercing, Crushing, Cutting). You can use these tables for your own game or devise your own.

There is a table for each kind of injury: See below for details.

The tables function as follows:

1–6: Minor, painful but not lethal (-1 to activity),

7–9: Major, potentially lethal (-3 to activity)

10–12: Lethal

The Referee may choose to roll 1d10 for mundane wounds and d12 for supernatural-sourced wounds. They may also choose smaller dice for lower stakes injuries.

Critical Injuries do not heal quickly. Minor Injuries can be ignored after 24 hours, Major and Lethal wounds after 2 weeks (assuming they don’t die).

When a Critical Occurs

A **Critical Injury** is inflicted when an attack deals **3 or more Harm** to a human-sized target **after armour reduction**.

- Roll **1d12** on the appropriate Critical table based on weapon type
- Armour can prevent a Critical entirely by reducing Harm below 3

Critical Injuries may require a Death Save. This is a roll against an Attribute (usually Body or Vitality) that may be modified a Skill or Quality (Stamina, etc). If the roll is a failure, the victim dies.

Lethal Criticals

Any Critical marked **Lethal** requires:

- An immediate Death Save
- Another Death Save after a **Scene**
- A final Death Save after a **Watch**

Failing **any** Death Save means the victim is dead.
Medical or magical aid may grant bonuses or delay death.

If the final Death Save is successful, the victim has been stabilised sufficiently that no more Death Saves are required (as long as they take no further Harm).

Optional SRD Rules

Pick the Critical Tables that please you. It’s common to tailor your Criticals/Wounds for each game so we include two sets below. If your game includes a lot of energy weapons, then a specific table for energy weapons and burns might be appropriate. If you need help with that, please get in touch and we can add it to the SRD.

Flesh Wounds Table

d12	Injury	Effect
1	Sprain	A joint twists painfully; movement impaired.
2	Deep Bruise	Heavy impact causes stiffness and pain.
3	Minor Cut	Bleeding but controllable; distraction and pain.
4	Muscle Tear	Sudden pain; reduced strength in affected limb.
5	Winded	Knocked breathless; reactions slowed briefly.
6	Staggering Blow	Balance disrupted; difficulty remaining upright.
7	Deep Laceration	Heavy bleeding and shock risk. *(Lethal)*
8	Broken Bone	Major limb compromised or unusable. *(Lethal)*
9	Internal Injury	Hidden trauma worsens each scene without treatment. *(Lethal)*
10	Fatal Trauma	Critical wound; death imminent without immediate intervention. *(Lethal)*
11	Pale Vein Spread	Cold grey discolouration spreads as if the Demesne touched the blood. *(Lethal)*
12	Echo Fracture	A second, unreal injury manifests and worsens alongside the first. *(Lethal)*

Heart Wounds Table

d12	Injury	Effect
1	Panic Spike	Brief overwhelming fear; composure shaken.
2	Shaking Fear	Hands tremble uncontrollably; fine actions impaired.
3	Sudden Sobs	Emotional collapse; speech and action falter.
4	Freezing Up	Momentary paralysis from fear or shock.
5	Fight-or-Flight Surge	Act rashly or instinctively under stress.
6	Overwhelm	Speech fractures; thoughts race uncontrollably.
7	Cardiac Strain	Breathing sharpens; risk of collapse under stress. *(Lethal)*
8	Shock Tremors	Body rattles violently; cannot steady yourself. *(Lethal)*
9	Near Breakdown	Dissociation; loss of situational awareness. *(Lethal)*
10	Heart Failure	Catastrophic emotional collapse stops the heart. *(Lethal)*
11	Dread Pulse	A formless terror surges from the Demesne; calm is unreachable. *(Lethal)*
12	Anchor Slip	Your Anchor flickers; identity and self blur dangerously. *(Lethal)*

Mind Wounds Table

d12	Injury	Effect
1	Dizzy Fall	Brief vertigo; actions slowed.
2	Blurred Focus	Difficulty tracking movement or threats.
3	Ringing Skull	Loud internal ringing; disorientation.
4	Light Concussion	Trouble concentrating or reasoning.
5	Short Memory Loss	Forget recent actions or events.
6	Sensory Overload	Light, sound, or motion become overwhelming.
7	Severe Concussion	Blackout risk; impaired cognition. *(Lethal)*
8	Cranial Bleed	Worsens over time; speech or vision falters. *(Lethal)*
9	Seizure Shock	Collapse with uncontrolled movement. *(Lethal)*
10	Brain Trauma	Immediate fatal neurological injury. *(Lethal)*
11	Double Sight	Reality and the Demesne overlap in vision. *(Lethal)*
12	Whisper Intrusion	Thoughts echo in a second, alien voice. *(Lethal)*

Piercing Wounds Table

d12	Injury	Heal Time
1	Grazed: Superficial wound, clean scar	1 week
2	Flesh Wound: Soft tissue hit	1 week
3	Embedded Tip: Weapon lodged in limb	2 weeks
4	Deep Stab: Organ-threatening depth	2 weeks
5	Gut Shot: Abdominal puncture, bleeding	1 month (Lethal)
6	Collapsed Lung: Chest penetration	1 month (Lethal)
7	Shoulder Punch: Arm disabled	1 month
8	Pierced Kidney or Liver	1 month (Lethal)
9	Thigh Artery: Rapid bleed-out	1 month (Lethal)
10	Heart Puncture: Instant death	Lethal
11	Brain Spike: Fatal head trauma	Lethal
12	Impaled Through Spine: Paralysis, death	Lethal

Crushing Wounds Table

d12	Injury	Heal Time
1	Glancing Blow: Mild concussion	1 week
2	Staggered: Cracked ribs or fingers	1 week
3	Blunt Force to Limb	2 weeks
4	Crushed Hand or Foot	2 weeks
5	Broken Ribs	1 month
6	Jaw Smashed: Cannot speak or eat	1 month
7	Pelvis Shattered	1 month (Lethal)
8	Spine Struck: Possible paralysis	1 month (Lethal)
9	Skull Fracture	1 month (Lethal)
10	Skull Caved In: Instant death	Lethal
11	Chest Caved: Seconds to live	Lethal
12	Crushed Entirely: No survival	Lethal

Cutting Wounds Table

d12	Injury	Heal Time
1	Shallow Slash	1 week
2	Nicked Muscle	1 week
3	Deep Laceration	2 weeks
4	Tendon Severed	2 weeks
5	Arterial Cut	1 month (Lethal)
6	Shoulder or Hip Opened	1 month (Lethal)
7	Face or Scalp Gash	1 month
8	Hand or Foot Partially Severed	1 month
9	Limb Severed	Permanent
10	Throat Opened	Lethal
11	Decapitation	Lethal
12	Body Bisected	Lethal

Burning / Energy Wounds Table

d12	Injury	Heal Time
1	**Flash Burn:** Reddened skin, intense pain	1 week
2	**Blistering Burn:** Skin bubbles, movement painful	1 week
3	**Scorched Limb:** Partial thickness burn, reduced use	2 weeks
4	**Seared Flesh:** Deep burn, charred tissue	2 weeks
5	**Nerve Burn:** Loss of sensation in area	1 month
6	**Shock Burn:** Systemic shock, weakness and confusion	1 month (Lethal)
7	**Airway Burn:** Breathing compromised	1 month (Lethal)
8	**Extensive Burns:** Large body area affected	1 month (Lethal)
9	**Full Thickness Burn:** Flesh destroyed to muscle/bone	Permanent
10	**Organ Cooked:** Internal damage from heat or radiation	Lethal
11	**Body Engulfed:** Severe burns over most of body	Lethal
12	**Incinerated:** Body destroyed by heat or energy	Lethal

WEAPONS AND ARMOUR

Weapon	REL	Auto	Harm	BLT	RNG	Mag	AM	WT	€
Unarmed	-	0	1	-	-	-	+3	-	-
Bottle	1	0	1	-	-	-	+3	0.25	-
Knife	5	0	2	-	-	-	+1	0.25	5
Club	5	0	2	-	-	-	+2	1	1
Sword	5	0	3	-	-	-	+1	1	20
Axe	5	0	3	-	-	-	+1	1	30
Spear	5	0	3	-	1	-	0	2	50
Rock	-	0	1	-	1	-	+2	0.5	-
Sling	5	0	1	-	2	-	+2	0.5	20
Bow	4	0	1	-	4	1	+1	1	150
Crossbow	4	0	2	-	4	1	0	1	200
Pistol	5	1	2	-	2	15	+1	0.5	100
Rifle	5	0	3	-	10	5	0	1	250
Shotgun	5	1	3	-	2	5	+1	1	200
Assault Rifle	5	3	2	-	5	30	0	1	400
Machine Gun	5	6	2	-	6	200	0	2	1000
Heavy Machine Gun	5	4	3		15	100	0	7	2000
Antitank Weapon	5	0	6	C	3	1	-1	1	100
Molotov cocktail	2	-	-	Fire C	2	1	1	1	15
Grenade Launcher	5	1	3	D	5	1	0	1	250

REL - the reliability of a weapon. If the weapon receives direct damage or a Complication, Reliability is reduced by 1.

Auto - the number of Ammo dice when firing the weapon as fast as possible.

Harm - the base Harm of the weapon.

BLT - the explosive rating of the weapon.

RNG - the Short Range of the weapon.

Mag - the amount of ammunition contained in the weapon before it needs reloaded.

AM - an armour modifier. When attacking an armoured target, the armour rating is affected by this value.

Price - an estimate of the real world value.

Descriptions

Unarmed - the default for most humans using their fists, feet, knees, elbows or head as weapons. Particularly ineffective against armoured combatants.

Bottle - using a bottle or similar as a weapon makes you more dangerous due to the chance of cutting your opponent.

Knife - anything from a short dagger to a machete so relatively easily concealed.

Club - anything from a stick to a table leg,

Sword - anything from a gladius (Roman short sword) to a katana (Japanese long sword). Not very concealable.

Axe - anything from a hand axe to a fire axe.

Spear - everything from a javelin to a pike. A spear can be used to keep someone out of range for a Hand to Hand Attack (similar to Suppression) if the successes are spent on fending off rather than Harm.

Rock - just a rock, flat, sharp or round. They have them lying around on the ground.

Sling - a difficult missile weapon to use doing little damage.

Bow - a bow is a challenging weapon to use without training.

Crossbow - uses mechanical operations to add power to a bow, and a handy aiming grip for better accuracy.

Pistol - a stand-in for many single handed firearms.

Rifle - a non-automatic (may be semi-automatic) long arm for shooting at extended distances. May be civilian owned in many countries.

Shotgun - a long arm firing lead pellets useful for short range and with low penetration.

Assault Rifle - any rifles used in military or paramilitary operations with a automatic or burst rate of fire.

Machine gun - a man portable or mounted automatic fire weapon with a high rate of fire and large ammunition capacity.

Heavy machine gun - most usually mounted and seldom able to be fired while being carried.

Antitank weapon - a man portable rocket weapon designed to defeat tank treads or defeat tank armour.

Grenade - a light explosive device designed to be thrown.

Molotov cocktail - a fragile container containing flammable liquid which is lit and thrown.

Grenade Launcher - a single shot weapon which propels grenades further and more accurately.

Armour

Armour Type	Location	Protection	Weight	Price
Steel Helmet	Head	1	1	25
Kevlar Helmet	Head	1	0.5	100
Steel Plate	Torso	2	3	300
Flak Jacket	Torso	1	1	150

Location - details the location protected by the armour.

Protection - the level of protection provided. Some have static minimum values and many have dice values which only provide protection on a Success. For example, a Flak Jacket commonly adds 1 point but may provide a second point of Protection when the Player rolls a Success on a single d6.

Descriptions

Steel Helmet - a metal helmet designed to stop light firearms.

Kevlar Helmet - a helmet made from Kevlar ballistic weave which is lighter.

Steel Plate - a thick plate of metal worn usually under clothes, usually with padding.

Flak Jacket - a light jacket designed to retain mobility while providing torso protection.

Encumbrance

The amount a character can carry depends on their Strength. They can carry their FLESH dice value in kilograms without any penalty but for every additional FLESH value, they get a -1 to their Mobility rolls. Carrying 2x your FLESH dice would impose -1, carrying 3x your FLESH dice would impose -2. This can be modified by using a backpack (doubling capacity). For obvious reasons, backpacks only help with the stuff placed into the backpack.

> For example, carrying 30 kilograms would result in a -2 for someone with FLESH d10 but a -4 for someone with FLESH d6. (30 is 3x 10 but 5x 6.). If the Mobility roll is reduced lower than 1d6, the PC can do nothing more than walk slowly.

Encumbrance is not one of the most glamorous rules and tends to have more effect in fantasy games rather than modern or science fiction. The lack of stores or vehicles exacerbates the need to carry everything with you.

GENRE SECTION

This section has sample entries for psychic powers, magic and superpowers.

PSYCHIC TALENTS

Using psychic abilities requires a Talent roll. This must be accompanied with one of the Attributes.

A Complication or Disaster on the roll directly affects the Attribute in question, reducing it by 1 Step on a complication or 2 Steps on a Disaster. If psychic talent roll results in three 1s rolled then the Psychic suffers a Critical Injury.

Psychic Stress Dice

Additional dice may be requested to help succeed, but these remain as Stress Dice and are on your character sheet

Psychic Class	Stress Dice
Wild Talent	d6
Minor Psychic	d8
Major Psychic	d10
Prodigy	d12
Terata	d20

Venting

Gestalt

Psychic Friction

Telepathy

Telepathy is the ability to have access to the inner thoughts of others. The Telepath feels the burden of the responsibility of having access to the secret thoughts of others, sometimes without wanting to. However, Telepathy is not just one way—the skilled Telepath can also send thoughts to others. This can feel much like a conversation between friends or, if desired, the target will be completely unaware that the thoughts they've just had did not originate inside their own mind.

The Telepath is particularly valued by the Esper communities because of their ability to act as a Conduit, connecting multiple Espers over vast distances to enable truly incredible Psychic feats that would not otherwise be possible. Much like the Regent, there can be a lot of mistrust for the Telepath, as nobody likes the idea of either their innermost thoughts being an open book, or of all their thoughts not being their own.

If a Regent excels in jobs that require talking, the Telepath often excels in those roles that require listening. It's equally likely that they'd be a therapist or a con artist, able to read the surface thoughts of patient or mark with equal ease and tell them what they need or want to hear.

Any job that requires a good understanding of the human condition can be helped along with a little 'insider info'. Naturally, the ability to read thoughts makes the Telepath an excellent investigator, interrogator or journalist.

Usage

All telepathy rolls are Opposed rolls against a targets Composure. the psychic will need to score more successes by the margin indicated.

Levels

★☆☆☆☆ Read surface thoughts

You can read the thoughts of a target you can see. Only what they are thinking of right now is available.

★★☆☆☆ Send thoughts

You can speak to the mind of another person in your line of sight. They will hear the voice in their head, in your language.

★★★☆☆ Read memories

You can read any memory from a target you can touch.

★★★★☆ Probe identity

You can delve into every aspect of a mind, wresting any detail you want, all secrets laid bare.

★★★★★ Overwrite / rewrite

If you are aware of certain parts of memory, you can rewrite them in another's mind by reinforcing concepts and speaking to them as if it is their own memory. Gaslighting from within.

Telepathic Complications

these should be in addition to any Harm received.

- You pick up unrelated surface thoughts, flooding you with noise and distraction.
- The target becomes uneasy or suspicious, sensing they were intruded upon.
- Emotional bleed-through leaves you shaken, angry, or distressed until you can vent.
- You misinterpret intent, receiving a truth coloured by fear, guilt, or desire.
- A third party with psychic sensitivity briefly brushes your presence.

Special Ability: Conduit

Any Telepath can use their talent to link with another Esper's mind. A single Success on a Talent roll is required to establish a channel between the Telepath and the other Esper. Once established, they can not only use it to provide communication abilities but also to transfer other Psychic Talents along the link, in either direction. As such, the other Esper can use their Talent as if they were at the location of the Telepath,

or vice versa. A Telepath can, with an additional Success, extend this Conduit to one additional Esper, allowing either of the others to be sender, receiver or both.

While linked, all Espers involved in the Conduit share a Stress pool and should a Vent happen, it will happen at all locations involved in the Conduit.

Vent Theme

When they Vent, Telepaths tend to lash out in all directions, spreading their pain and anguish to any minds nearby. These cause blinding headaches, nosebleeds, lapses in memory, and feelings of alienation as people think other's thoughts without any idea of what's happening.

Psychometry

Psychometry is the ability to read psychic emanations off objects, places and people. The Psychometrist can discern the layout of a building, where a car has been, who's held an object, or important events in someone's life.

It can be hard to keep secrets from a sniffer. Even though they aren't reading their target's mind as a Telepath would, the emanations given off by someone can reveal as much information, and often more. Where they tend to shine is in learning information about places and things. This makes them excellent journalists and investigators, and they are highly prized by the Projects for tracking down missing Espers (which is how they get the nickname Hound).

Levels

Psychometry (Touch-Based Clairvoyance)

★☆☆☆☆ Emotional Residue

You sense the strongest emotions associated with the object or place: fear, anger, love, desperation. No context, just raw feeling.

★★☆☆☆ Recent Impressions

You glimpse fragmented images or sensations from recent use: hands, movement, sounds, flashes of intent. Enough to confirm what happened, not why.

★★★☆☆ Memory Echoes

You access clear, subjective memories tied to the object or location, usually from moments of stress or importance. These memories are incomplete and emotionally biased.

★★★★☆ Ownership Trace

You identify patterns of identity linked to the object: who relied on it, who feared it, who was shaped by it. This can reveal long-term ownership, attachment, or repeated use by the same person.

★★★★★ Rewrite Imprint

You alter or overwrite the psychic residue of the object or place. Future psychometric readings are changed, suppressed, or falsified. This does not change the past — it changes what can be known about it.

Psychometry Complications

- The impressions are emotionally overwhelming, leaving you shaken or distracted for the rest of the scene.
- Memories bleed together, giving you accurate details but in the wrong order, leading to dangerous assumptions.
- You leave a psychic residue of your own, making later readings traceable back to you.
- The object or place becomes psychically inert for a Scene, resisting further readings.
- You sense a presence tied to the object that becomes aware it has been disturbed.

Special ability: Keepsakes

Significant objects in a Psychometrist's life end up becoming imbued with a powerful sympathetic bond, almost entirely subconsciously. These are called Sympathetically Bonded Artefacts in Project nomenclature, but are most commonly referred to as Keepsakes.

Each Psychometrist can have a number of Keepsakes up to the number of their Talent dice (so somewhere between 6 and 12), but most have only a few. The Keepsake should be something that has some meaning for the Esper, and players are encouraged to come up with a backstory for each Keepsake they have (this should happen shortly before or after the Keepsake first comes into play).

Suitable Keepsakes include things like items of jewellery, childhood toys, photographs, letters ... things that we as humans value as mementoes or treasures over the course of our lives.

The sympathetic bond allows the Psychometrist to read the Keepsake from anywhere in the world. Psychometrists tend to be gift-givers once they figure this out. Handing Keepsakes to their loved ones is a habit they develop in order to easily keep in touch. If a Keepsake is held or worn, the range is assumed to be Touch (with the appropriate bonus).

Additionally, the sympathetic bond can pair with the Conduit ability of a Telepath. If a Telepath establishes a Conduit with a Psychometrist, one part of the Conduit can be any of the Psychometrist's Keepsakes. See Conduit on page XXXX for more information.

Vent Theme

When Psychometrists Vent, their sympathetic connection to the physical world gets broadcast in violent and confusing fashion. People caught in the backlash may experience the life of inanimate objects around them, or of other people, or their body may malfunction as it tries to be something it is not. Places and things tremble and break as on some level they try to become something or someone else entirely.

Psychokinesis

Psychokinetics can lift and move matter with the power of their minds. It is one of the most visible Talents and also one of the most well-known, both by its portrayal in the media and its inclusion (or a facsimile of it) in many forms of live entertainment. This is a two-edged sword for the Psychokinetic, for on the the one hand making an object move of its own accord is clearly not normal, but on the other hand most people have seen stage magicians do something similar and so are willing to believe that there's some mundane trick behind what is seemingly impossible.

With such a visible effect, there is no particular career that lends itself to those with this Talent, although a decent proportion discover their ability while climbing, having used it to save either their own life or someone else's. It's not unusual that a Teek will be in one of the more dangerous roles in a construction or engineering crew. It's also a Talent that can involve fine motor control, not just the raw power of, say, flipping a car. In a world dominated by gadgets with many tiny components, the skilled Psychokinetic can either repair or destroy in equal measure.

Levels

★☆☆☆☆ Nudge Object

You move or disturb a small object briefly: a cup tips, a drawer slides, a switch flicks. Fine control, minimal force.

★★☆☆☆ Manipulate

You lift, pull, or hold an object with deliberate control. Comparable to one steady hand acting at a short distance.

★★★☆☆ Forceful Action

You apply significant force: shove a person, slam a door, hurl an object, or restrain something struggling. Control is rough; collateral is likely.

★★★★☆ Sustained Control

You maintain force over time or across multiple targets: holding someone pinned, levitating a heavy object, or exerting pressure through resistance. This is physically and mentally draining.

★★★★★ Structural Impact

You deform, break, or collapse solid structures: crush mechanisms, buckle metal, shatter supports. This always has lasting consequences and attracts attention.

Psychokinesis Complications

- Your force slips, causing unintended movement or damage nearby.
- You apply too much pressure, damaging the object or surface you were manipulating.
- The effort leaves you physically shaken or briefly disoriented, affecting your next action.
- The disturbance creates noise, vibration, or visible signs that draw attention.
- You lose fine control, forcing you to choose between dropping the effect or escalating it.

Special Ability: Direct Attack

Psychokinetics can use their talent to attack their opponent's body directly. This is an attack with a Base Harm of 1, ignoring Armour if they wish.

Vent Theme

Psychokinetic Venting is usually explosive, causing concussive and force damage to everything in the radius and destroying delicate electronics. Every bulb will blow, windows will shatter, and everyone will feel assaulted physically.

Precognition

Precognition is the ability to see the future. How this happens varies from person to person, but the most common are through dreams or visions—the only difference really being whether you're awake or asleep when they happen. Life as a Precog is generally pretty good (if any Esper's life can be said to be good): in general, a Precog cannot be surprised, ambushed or cheated. They also very rarely get lost, having already seen where they made a wrong turn and avoided it in the first place. Oh, and they can easily make a few bucks on the side with a well-placed bet.

It's theorised that Precogs have existed since the earliest of times, and that figures from history and mythology have had enough delta-psi with this ability to become the seers and prophets of their people. However, the lack of ability to verify this through accurate DNA sampling means that the point is largely moot.

Levels

★☆☆☆☆ Foreboding

You sense imminent danger or opportunity. A feeling of something about to happen, without detail or certainty.

★★☆☆☆ Flash of Outcome

You glimpse a brief, symbolic image of a likely near future: an accident, a confrontation, an escape route. Timing and cause are unclear.

★★★☆☆ Thread of Events

You perceive a short sequence of actions leading to a probable outcome. You understand how things might unfold if nothing changes.

★★★★☆ Branching Futures

You see multiple possible outcomes and the key decision points that separate them. You know which actions make things better or worse, but not which will occur.

★★★★★ Intervention

You actively anchor one possible future, suppressing others. The world subtly bends toward a chosen outcome.

Precognition Complications

- The vision is symbolic or misleading, true in outcome but false in detail.
- You see multiple possible futures at once and struggle to tell which is most likely.
- The knowledge distracts you, leaving you hesitant or second-guessing in the present moment.
- Acting on the vision closes off other options, even if you don't yet realise which.
- The glimpse leaves an emotional imprint (fear, dread, certainty) that skews your judgement until the scene ends.

Special Ability: Preparations

The Precog can create Preparations based on their precognitive abilities. This should be played out like a flashback and is subject to the limits of what has already been established in the storyline and the timing of the precognition.

For each Success, the Precog can have a single Preparation. For example, hiding a weapon where they know they won't be searched or writing a letter to themselves with important information that arrives the day before. Each Preparation should be carefully narrated by the Precog and should involve the other players. If the opposing side also has a Precog, the player will be informed and it becomes an Opposed Action, with the winner being able to make a number of Preparations equal to the Margin of Victory. When they try and use Preparations, the situation will reveal itself.

By necessity, Preparations have to remain covert, even secret. If the subject of the Preparations is revealed, behaviours will change and break the Preparation. Preparations also cannot break the laws of

physics. For example, if a player has been searched, they cannot declare they have a concealed weapon they prepared earlier.

Example: Richard has Major Precognition d12. He and his cell have just learned that they have less than an hour to break into a government facility before the Project staff move a shipment of Psilence. Richard rolls to see if he is Prepared. He rolls 1 Success, and decides that yesterday he went and bought masks for each member of the cell and stuffed them in his glove box. The Referee agrees that this is possible, as this is something that would be secret, and would not break the known events of the story's timeline so far.

Vent Theme

A Precog Venting will distort everyone's sense of time. For some, it will attack the nervous system, wracking them with pain and destroying any sense of time while doing it. They may feel as if they've been subjected to pain for an eternity. For others, they'll relive half their lives in mere moments, or remember things they haven't done yet. These glimpses of the future can have a profound impact on the victims, beyond what happens in the moment, as they can easily end up futilely chasing the future they saw.

Pyrokinesis

The Pyrokinetic can cause fires and nonsourced heat. This ability, combined with fire's intrinsic destructive and capricious nature, makes the Pyro capable of tremendously destructive acts. As a result, these Espers are especially tracked and hunted down by the various government Projects, both to help ensure public safety, and as a potential weapon against enemies of the state.

No matter the level of skill or experience of the Pyro, it can be all too easy for a fire to get started unintentionally or to burn a lot more intensely than intended. It's common for many Pyros (and their loved ones) to have burn scars.

While Pyros aren't completely immune to fire, they do tend to have a lot more control of the temperature around them. For some, it means wearing shorts all year round, but equally some wear long sleeves even in summer (often to hide the aforementioned scars). Pyros can also reduce the intensity of fire, and so quite a few of them end up actually being firefighters, or in other jobs that use fire or heat, such as chef, welder or glass blowing. These kind of jobs also easily explain away the scars ..

Levels

★☆☆☆☆ Kindle

You raise temperature locally: warm metal, dry fuel, snuff or coax a small flame. Enough to start or stop fire under the right conditions.

★★☆☆☆ Ignite

You deliberately start a small fire or intensify an existing one: paper, fabric, fuel vapour, exposed wiring. Control is brief and situational.

★★★☆☆ Project Flame

You create a directed burst of fire or intense heat: a jet, flare, or flash that can burn, blind, or force movement. Collateral damage is likely.

★★★★☆ Sustained Burn

You maintain or spread fire across an area, shaping its intensity over time: holding a barrier of flame, driving people back, or consuming a space. This rapidly escalates risk and attention.

★★★★★ Conflagration

You trigger uncontrolled fire behaviour: flashover, structural ignition, or cascading burns. The fire takes on a life of its own and cannot be safely contained.

Pyrokinesis Complications

- The fire spreads unpredictably, igniting something you did not intend.
- Smoke, heat, or light draws immediate attention, even if the flames are brief.
- You misjudge intensity, causing burns, scorching, or heat damage beyond your target.
- The fire consumes or damages something valuable, fragile, or irreplaceable.
- Residual heat or embers remain, meaning the fire is not fully out and may flare up later.

Special Ability: Extinguish

The Pyrokinetic is mostly immune to fire and heat, reducing it rapidly to room temperature. This can be used creatively. They can reduce the intensity of any fire by 1 Step per Success. The most common use of this for Major Pyros is to reduce the intensity of the fires they started!

Vent Theme

Pyrokinetic Venting is terrifying to behold as everything around the Pyro catches heats up quickly and catches fire. Superheated air causes fireballs to form and objects start to melt.

Biokinesis

Biookinesis the ability to regenerate tissue and knit bones through the transfer of psychic energy. The Esper exerts control over the body's natural healing processes, healing in moments what should talk days or weeks, even curing the incurable. Conversely, horrendous wounds can be inflicted, seemingly without cause.

Many biokinetics have a day job that also involves healing, allowing them to put their talents to good use without arousing suspicion. Some are personal trainers, helping their clients 'get in shape' by literally reshaping them over time, or plastic surgeons. There are also the darker uses of this ability which leads to people becoming excellent hitmen or assassins, leaving many a coroner baffled as to the source of injury or sometimes even the cause of death.

Within the Network, where they are often called Fixers, the Healer is well regarded for their ability to cure maladies that would otherwise result in too many questions—bullet wounds and parapharmaceutical dosing being the two most common. But the primary use for the most powerful of them is for their fleshshaping ability, giving those cell members who are being actively hunted a way to change their appearance and begin anew.

Levels

★☆☆☆☆ Stabilise

You ease pain, slow bleeding, and reduce shock. This keeps someone alive and conscious, but does not heal injuries.

★★☆☆☆ Accelerate Recovery

You speed natural healing: closing minor wounds, reducing inflammation, restoring function sooner than normal. Injuries remain, but recovery is shortened.

★★★☆☆ Restore Function

You knit tissue, repair serious wounds, and restore lost function: setting bones, repairing organs, reversing paralysis or severe trauma. Scarring and fatigue are common.

★★★★☆ Psychic Surgery

You perform precise internal alterations without tools: removing tumours, correcting deformities, rerouting nerves, or altering internal structures. This is invasive, exhausting, and often traumatic for both healer and patient.

★★★★★ Resculpt Body

You reshape the body at a fundamental level: altering appearance, physiology, or biological limits. This creates permanent change and always carries profound physical, psychological, or social consequences.

Psychic Healing Complications

- The pain transfers partially to you, leaving you shaken, injured, or impaired for the rest of the scene.
- Healing is uneven: the injury closes, but function is reduced or unstable.
- You absorb emotional or physical trauma, causing distress, nausea, or flashback-like sensations.
- The healed tissue is fragile or altered, leading to relapse or complications later.
- The patient becomes psychically dependent or emotionally fixated on you.

Special Ability: Fleshshaping

The Biokineticcan mould flesh like it was clay, reshape bones and change physical characteristics in others. They can't change hair, skin colour, or colour of eyes but they can perform almost any plastic surgery imaginable without scars.

The process is excruciatingly painful for the target.

This process takes place over multiple turns. Each turn, make a Talent roll and reduce the target's STR level by 1 for each Success, and reduce the target's EMP by 1. If the target's STR is still above zero, repeat this process next turn. If their EMP reaches 0, roll on the Mental Trauma table (page XXXX). If the target reaches 0 STR, well done! They are now ready for reshaping. Make a normal Talent roll as if you are healing, and

increase STR by the number of Successes. All desired physical changes take place as soon as you roll 1 Success, and the remaining STR deficit must heal with a night's rest

Vent Theme

Possibly the most horrific Venting is when Biokinetics lash out, rending flesh and reshaping bone. Blood rains like confetti as the substance of bodies is stretched out in a lattice of gore. People's faces and bodies are reshaped, to the point where they cannot recognise themselves, assuming they survive.

Regent

Regent is the ability to dominate minds, both human and animal. As such, the Regent is as mistrusted as the Telepath who can hear your thoughts, and as feared as the Pyrokinetic who can burn you to a crisp. Many Regents are also charismatic, able to convince people to do things without any use of Talent, yet able to fall back on their Talent when charm doesn't get them exactly what they want. Thus it can be very difficult to tell if someone has been a victim of a Regent, and likewise tricky to tell if someone is a Regent, without recourse to Esper involvement.It's common, therefore, for Regents to be able to keep a job for as long as they want, regardless of their ability to do it.

However, they obviously shine in jobs that require one-to-one communication and convincing others: sales, politics, and even extortion are all well-paid gigs for someone who can literally tell someone else what to do and know it will be done. Some people are less mentally equipped to resist the Regent ability, and these easily dominated souls can sometimes end up in a constant orbit around the Regent, taking on the role of groupies and yes-men to feed the egos of less principled (or more narcissistic Espers)

Levels

All Regent rolls are Opposed rolls against a targets Composure. the psychic will need to score more successes by the margin indicated.

★☆☆☆☆ Compel Attention

You force focus on yourself or another location. The target cannot look away, or disengage for a Beat (6-10 seconds)

★★☆☆☆ Impose Emotion

You induce a strong emotional state: fear, calm, trust, urgency. The feeling fades within a Scene (6-10 minutes), but its effects linger.

★★★☆☆ Command Action

You issue a simple, immediate command the target understands and can physically perform. The action must be brief and direct and if the roll is successful, cannot be otherwise opposed.

★★★★☆ Sustained Control

You maintain control over the target's actions for a short period, guiding behaviour step by step. Resistance builds rapidly and consequences are severe.

★★★★★ Rewrite Will

You alter core motivations, loyalties, or beliefs, suppressing the target's agency. This creates lasting psychological damage and always produces significant fallout.

Regent Complications

- The target resists subconsciously, causing delays, hesitation, or partial compliance.
- Emotional bleed-through leaves you flooded with the target's fear, anger, or guilt.
- The target later experiences confusion or memory gaps, raising suspicion.
- Your influence leaves a psychic trace, making future contact or investigation more likely.
- The imposed emotion or command overcorrects, creating an unintended reaction or escalation

Special Ability: Sleeper

The Regent can embed commands within the mind of another awaiting either a trigger or a timer. When the command is triggered, it is as if the Regent is present.

For a Minor Regent, the trigger must be audible, such as a key phrase, a particular song, or an alarm. For a Major Regent, the trigger can be anything, or it can just be after an elapsed time. Note that in this case, the duration of the command applies to the execution of the command itself, not the length of time until the sleeper is triggered..

Vent Theme

Regents, when they Vent, broadcast their strongest emotions as commands. This often defaults to simple destructive impulses: victims clawing at their own eyes and faces, stabbing themselves or otherwise putting themselves in danger; however, it can also be a fear response, creating mass hysteria that carries its own dangers and repercussions.

MAGIC

This system was designed to be used with a homebrew game inspired by the Witcher series by Andrzej Sapkowski. This differs heavily from the freeform magic rules we devised for Tales of Distant Lands, which is inspired by the Earthsea series by Ursula K. Leguin.

Magic is not a safe or passive force. It is an act of **will imposed on reality**, drawing on unstable energies that resist control. Those who practice magic are not simply skilled professionals but individuals who knowingly accept **risk, corruption, and physical consequence** in exchange for power.

In the AME framework, magic is:

- **Active** rather than ambient
- **Costly**, with consequences even on success
- **Scalable**, allowing minor effects safely and major effects only through risk

Magic is resolved through the same core resolution mechanics as other actions, but introduces an additional subsystem: **Chaos Dice**.

Not everyone can use magic. The ability to shape reality requires an innate or acquired **Magical Quality** that marks the character as capable of surviving contact with chaotic forces.

Magical Talent or Quality

Magical Aptitude (Required Quality)

To cast spells, a character **must possess a Magical Aptitude**, Magical Talent, or equivalent Quality defined by the setting.

This Quality represents one or more of the following:

- Innate sensitivity to arcane forces
- Formal arcane training
- Mutation, blessing, or supernatural alteration
- Survival conditioning against magical backlash

Without this Quality:

- A character cannot cast spells
- Attempting to channel magic automatically fails and causes immediate harm or narrative consequence at GM discretion

This rule is intentional. Magic is not a skill you “dabble” in. In some settings, it may be assumed that all PCs (or indeed all peoples) may have this magical quality already.

Optional Enhancements (SRD Hooks)

An AME SRD may define optional magic-adjacent Qualities such as:

- **Arcane Knack**: Extra benefit when casting a specific category of magic
- **Magical Ward**: Limited automatic resistance to magical effects
- **Forbidden Lore**: Increased insight at the cost of narrative risk

These do not grant access to magic on their own; they modify how dangerous magic becomes.

Spellcasting

Core Spellcasting Roll

The rules assume the presence of a Spellcasting skill. This is not an absolute requirement and the rules still apply even if there isn't a Spellcasting skill.

When casting a spell, the player:

1. Rolls the appropriate Attribute + Spellcasting Skill
2. Counts total **Successes**
3. Compares successes to the spell's **Required Success Level**

If the total successes meet or exceed the requirement, the spell succeeds.

If not, the spell fails.

However, powerful magic almost always requires more successes than a character can reliably generate. This is where **Chaos Dice** enter play.

Spare Successes are still useful. They may be used to boost duration, area effect or other effects (Harm). These are usually incremental. They may also be listed within the Spell descriptions below.

Chaos Dice

Chaos Dice are additional dice voluntarily added to a spellcasting roll to increase the chance of success.

- Each Chaos Die is a **d6 (but also may be d4, d8, d10, d12, d20)**
- Each Chaos Die can generate:
  - A **Success** (on a 5 or higher)
  - A **Bane** (on a 1)
- All Complications apply immediately
- Nudges may be applied to a single dice.

Chaos Dice represent raw, uncontrolled magical force being dragged into reality.

Complications and Harm

Each Complication rolled on Chaos Dice causes:

- **1 Harm** applied directly to an Attribute of the caster's choice

For every **3 Harm** taken from Chaos Dice:

- The caster suffers **1 Critical Injury**

If an Attribute is reduced to 0:

- The caster becomes unconscious or incapacitated
- Further consequences are at GM discretion

Important:
Even if the spell **fails**, all Complications still apply.

Magic does not forgive mistakes.

Chaos Dice scale linearly in reward but exponentially in danger.

Expected Results (Rule of Thumb) for d6 Chaos Dice

Chaos Dice	Expected Successes	Expected Complications
1	0.17	0.17
3	0.5	0.5
6	1	1
9	1.5	1.5
12	2	2

1	16.7%
2	30.6%
3	42.1%
4	51.8%
5	59.8%
6	66.5%
8	76.7%
10	83.8%

Example (SRD Neutral)

A caster attempts a spell requiring **5 Successes**.
They reliably generate **2 Successes** from their base roll.

They choose to add **6 Chaos Dice**.

- The Chaos Dice generate 3 additional Successes
- They also generate 2 Complications (a Disaster)

Result:

- The spell succeeds (5 total successes)
- The caster takes **2 Harm**
- No Critical Injury (yet)

This structure allows players to make informed, dramatic risk decisions.

Mitigating Chaos (Advanced Rules)

The system allows limited methods to reduce the lethality of Chaos Dice without removing risk entirely.

Ritual Casting

- Requires significant time investment
- Allows Harm from Complications to be **distributed across Attributes and even across Participants**
- Prevents single-attribute collapse, and single-player collapse.
- Does not remove Harm, only spreads it

Sacrificial Casting

- Harm from Complications may be transferred to another creature within reach
- Consent is optional and setting-dependent
- This is always morally and narratively significant

Places of Power

- Certain locations grant **automatic bonus successes**
- Only apply to compatible magic
- Often attract danger, attention, or supernatural consequences

These options should be rare, contextual, and story-driven, not routine optimisations.

Wild Magic (Optional SRD Rule)

A caster may attempt to create or improvise a spell they do not know.

- The GM secretly assigns a Required Success Level
- The player must guess how much Chaos to risk

- Failure is common
- Consequences are often severe

Wild Magic reinforces the core theme:

Magic is discovery paid for in blood, fear, or debt.

Intent-Based Magic (Optional SRD rule)

This optional rule replaces fixed spell lists with **intent-based magic**, allowing players to shape effects dynamically while preserving risk, balance, and narrative weight.

Flexible Magic is recommended for campaigns where magic is **rare, personal, symbolic, or mythic**, rather than technical or formulaic.

Core Principle

Magic is defined by **what the caster intends**, not by predefined spell names.

The player describes:

- What they want to change
- How they want it to manifest
- Why it should work, symbolically or narratively

The GM translates this intent into:

- A Magic Level (1–9)
- A Required Success threshold
- An expected Chaos Dice range

1. Declare Intent

The player states, in plain language:

- The desired outcome
- The scope (single target, zone, scene, etc.)
- Any symbolic or emotional framing

Example:
“I want to still the wind around the ship so we can land safely, using the calm before a storm.”

2. Determine Effect Tier

The GM assigns a **Magic Level** based on scale and impact:

Level	Effect Scope
1–2	Sensory, minor, personal
3–4	Tactical, situational
5–6	Destructive, transformative
7–8	World-altering
9	Mythic, era-defining

This step replaces spell lists entirely.

The GM may adjust by ±1 for:

- Elegant symbolism
- Strong narrative justification
- Casting conditions (ritual, place of power, sacrifice)

3. Channel Chaos Dice

The caster may add **Chaos Dice** freely to meet the Required Successes.

- Chaos Dice behave normally
- Complications apply immediately
- High-level effects almost always require Chaos

The player always knows:

- How many Successes they are short
- Roughly how much Chaos is being invited

This preserves informed consent.

Sympathetic Magic

The caster may describe:

- Objects
- Gestures
- Memories
- Emotions
- Environmental alignment

Each meaningful sympathetic element may:

- Reduce Required Successes by 1 (minimum 1), or
- Convert one neutral Chaos Die into a normal die, at GM discretion

These elements are narrative tools, not inventory taxes.

Failure and Partial Success

Flexible Magic never simply "fails".

If Required Successes are not met:

- The intent manifests **imperfectly**, **dangerously**, or **sideways**
- Chaos Complications shape the outcome
- The GM should twist the effect toward irony, cost, or escalation

Example:

- The wind stills… but only above the ship, creating violent downdrafts elsewhere.

Overreach

If the player attempts an effect **beyond Level 9**:

- The spell automatically succeeds
- The GM introduces a **permanent scar**:
    - To the caster
    - To the location
    - To the world
    - To history or memory

Overreach is never rolled. It is **declared hubris**.

Optional Constraint: Magical Domain

For tighter tone control, assign each caster **one or two Domains**:

- Storm

- Flesh
- Stone
- Memory
- Flame
- Silence
- Thresholds

Casting within a Domain:

- Reduces Required Successes by 1

Casting outside all Domains:

- Adds +1 Chaos Die automatically

Spell Lists

Depending on the game, the Referee may decide to give the entire spell list to the players or they may ration them as occulted knowledge which must be discovered. A good guideline is for a starting wizard is to give them the Level 1 spells and let them discover the higher spells through play.

Level 1 Spells (Minor Effects)

1. Flickerlight

    Effect: Create a steady magical light illuminating your zone and adjacent areas.
    Duration: One Scene.
    Sympathetic Components: A candle stub, glow-worm resin, polished glass.

2. Arcane Nudge

    Effect: Push, pull, or tip a small unattended object within reach.
    Duration: Instant.
    Sympathetic Components: A breath blown across the palm, a magnet, a finger snap.

3. Veil of Silence

    Effect: Muffle sound within your zone, imposing penalties to hearing-based Notice.
    Duration: One Scene.
    Sympathetic Components: Ash rubbed on the lips, wool cloth, sealed wax.

4. Sense the Tainted

    Effect: Detect nearby magic, curses, or supernatural influence as vague impressions.
    Duration: Concentration, up to one Scene.
    Sympathetic Components: Salt on the tongue, a pendulum, smoked crystal.

5. Minor Mend

    Effect: Restore one step to a single non-critical Attribute.
    Duration: Instant.
    Sympathetic Components: Clean water, a stitched thread, crushed herbs.

Level 2 Spells (Controlled Magic)

1. Binding Grasp

    Effect: Restrain a human-sized target, limiting movement and actions unless resisted.
    Duration: One Scene or until broken.
    Sympathetic Components: Twine, knotted cord, clenched fist.

2. Arcane Screen

    Effect: Create a translucent barrier that absorbs a limited amount of Harm.
    Duration: Three Beats.
    Sympathetic Components: Chalk sigil, shard of glass, crossed arms.

3. Mask of Another

    Effect: Alter your appearance to resemble a similar humanoid.
    Duration: One Scene.
    Sympathetic Components: Face powder, mirror shard, borrowed clothing.

4. Force Pulse

    Effect: Emit a short-range shockwave that knocks targets prone or back one zone. May be avoided with an appropriate roll.
    Duration: Instant.
    Sympathetic Components: Stomped foot, struck drum, clenched jaw.

5. Clear Thought

    Effect: Remove fear, confusion, or magical distraction from one target, removing penalties for fatigue or distraction.
    Duration: Instant; mental clarity lasts one scene.
    Sympathetic Components: Herbal tea, written mantra, steady breathing.

Level 3 Spells (Risk-Adjacent Magic)

1. Elemental Lash

   Effect: Strike a target with fire, ice, lightning, or stone, dealing significant Harm. Does 3 Harm (plus additional for extra Successes)
   Duration: Instant.
   Sympathetic Components: Charcoal, frost-rimed stone, metal rod.

2. Walk Unseen

   Effect: Become difficult to perceive, imposing penalties on attempts to detect you. (Base -3 to detect, may be boosted with Successes)
   Duration: One scene or until you attack.
   Sympathetic Components: Hooded cloak, ash smear, held breath.

3. Mind Pierce

   Effect: Inflict mental Harm and surface emotional distress on a single target. Base 3 Harm on a mental attribute.
   Duration: Instant; effects linger one scene.
   Sympathetic Components: Eye contact, whispered name, cold iron.

4. Summon the Lesser Gate

   Effect: Open a brief portal between two nearby visible locations.
   Duration: One Beat.
   Sympathetic Components: Chalk circle, matching symbols, split coin.

5. Shape Flesh

   Effect: Temporarily alter a target's physical form in minor but unsettling ways.
   Duration: One Scene.
   Sympathetic Components: Wax figurine, bone needle, animal fat.

Level 4 Spells (Potent, Unstable)

1. Crushing Force

   Effect: Slam a target or object with invisible pressure, inflicting heavy Harm or structural damage. This inflicts a Crushing critical regardless of actual Harm inflicted unless the target is wearing rigid armour.
   Duration: Instant.
   Sympathetic Components: Cracked stone, clenched jaw, iron weight.

2. Veil of the Unseen

   Effect: Render yourself and carried gear fully invisible to mundane senses.
   Duration: One scene.
   Sympathetic Components: Black silk, breath held, unlit candle.

3. Break the Mind

   Effect: Shatter a target's concentration, inflicting mental Harm and disorientation. Base 4 Harm to a Mental attribute.
   Duration: Instant; confusion lasts one scene.
   Sympathetic Components: Shattered mirror, whispered secrets, cold water.

4. Living Shield

   Effect: Shape surrounding matter or force into a mobile barrier that absorbs Harm. The Shield protects against all physical Harm until it collapses.
   Duration: Three Beats, extended per Success.
   Sympathetic Components: Chalk sigils on skin, layered clothing, bark strip.

5. Blood Recall

   Effect: Heal multiple Attributes or significantly reduce Critical Injury recovery time. Each Success represents 1 point of Harm healed or a Critical healing time reduced by 50%

Duration: Instant; recovery benefits persist.
Sympathetic Components: Warm blood, iron taste, binding thread.

Level 5 Spells (Dangerous, World-Marking)

1. Elemental Surge

   Effect: Unleash elemental destruction across an entire zone, harming all within. Each person within the Zone must roll 5d6. For each Success (5+) they receive 1 point of Harm.
   Duration: Instant; environmental effects linger one scene.
   Sympathetic Components: Burnt offering, storm water, scorched metal.

2. Walk the Empty Air

   Effect: Move freely through the air, ignoring gravity and obstacles.
   Duration: One Scene.
   Sympathetic Components: Feather, open palms, whispered wind-name.

3. Command the Flesh

   Effect: Seize control of a living body's movement unless strongly resisted.
   Duration: One Scene or until broken.
   Sympathetic Components: Wax doll, tied sinew, blood mark.

4. Far Gate

   Effect: Open a stable portal to a distant known location large enough to pass through.
   Duration: One Beat plus one per Success.
   Sympathetic Components: Matched sigils, personal token from destination, split bone.

5. Devour Thought

   Effect: Tear memories or knowledge from a target, leaving psychic damage behind. The Caster must have more Successes than the target can generate in resistance.
   Duration: Instant; loss is permanent unless restored by magic.
   Sympathetic Components: Written name, burned page, eye contact.

Level 6 Spells (Catastrophic, Story-Altering)

1. Rain of Ruin

   Effect: Devastate multiple connected zones with overwhelming elemental force. Everything within the zones takes 6d6 Harm (target of 5+)
   Duration: Instant; destruction persists.
   Sympathetic Components: Broken weapon, sacrificial fire, shouted invocation.

2. Unmake the Form

   Effect: Transform a target into a mundane animal or warped shape.
   Duration: One Scene; reversal requires recasting or ritual.
   Sympathetic Components: Animal bone, mirror shard, binding cord.

3. Tear the Veil

   Effect: Open a breach to another realm, allowing entities or energies to intrude.
   Duration: One Scene or until sealed.
   Sympathetic Components: Blood sigil, cracked lens, ringing bell.

4. Rewrite the Moment

   Effect: Undo or alter a significant recent event involving the caster.
   Duration: Retroactive; consequences are immediate.
   Sympathetic Components: Broken clock, snapped thread, burned oath.

5. Bind the Soul

   Effect: Anchor a spirit to a place, object, or body, preventing passage or escape.
   Duration: Permanent until broken.
   Sympathetic Components: True name, iron nail, sealed vessel.

Level 7 Spells (Cataclysmic)

1. Scour the Field

    Effect: Obliterate all creatures and structures in a single large zone with overwhelming force.
    Duration: Instant; devastation remains.
    Sympathetic Components: Broken banner, handful of ash, shouted command.

2. Raise the Silent Host

    Effect: Reanimate multiple corpses as obedient but unstable servants.
    Duration: One Scene or until destroyed. The number depends on the readily available corpses; very effective in a cemetery or battlefield.
    Sympathetic Components: Grave soil, blooded blade, funerary chant.

3. Break the Crown

    Effect: Shatter the authority, morale, or supernatural legitimacy of a leader or institution. The leader or institution suffers a -3 on all attempts to assert authority.
    Duration: Permanent unless undone by equal magic.
    Sympathetic Components: Stolen sigil, melted coin, snapped oath.

4. Worldfire Descent

    Effect: Call down sustained elemental destruction across several connected zones.
    Duration: One Scene; fires and ruin persist.
    Sympathetic Components: Burning offering, scorched weapon, invocation to the sky.

Level 8 Spells (Reality-Bending)

1. Unwrite the Self

    Effect: Erase a creature from memory, records, and magical recognition.
    Duration: Permanent; traces may persist.
    Sympathetic Components: Name written and burned, blank parchment, covered mirror.

2. Rewrite Fate

    Effect: Alter the outcome of a major past event involving the caster or their allies.
    Duration: Retroactive; consequences propagate immediately.
    Sympathetic Components: Broken clock, reversed symbol, cut thread.

3. Seal the Horizon

    Effect: Prevent travel, communication, or magic from crossing a vast boundary.
    Duration: One year and one day, or until shattered.
    Sympathetic Components: Iron stakes, boundary stones, bloodline oath.

Level 9 Spells (Apocalyptic – Maximum Level)

Level 9 magic always leaves a scar. Success does not mean safety. These are very much narrative outcomes.

1. Shatter the World-Skin

    Effect: Tear open reality itself, permanently linking this place to another realm or void.
    Duration: Permanent.
    Sympathetic Components: Living sacrifice, shattered lens, true name of a place.

2. Bind the Law

    Effect: Rewrite or impose a metaphysical rule governing a person, place, or concept.
    Duration: Permanent.
    Sympathetic Components: Written law in blood, broken crown, sworn witnesses.

3. End the Age

    Effect: Bring a defined era, power structure, or supernatural condition to an irrevocable end.
    Duration: Eternal.
    Sympathetic Components: Extinguished flame, destroyed relic, final declaration.

SUPERPOWERS

Each Power is purchased in **Tiers** that describe how far it has escalated from human scale into something the world can no longer easily absorb. Higher Tiers increase reach, impact, and consequence, not safety. Every Power should carry **Limits** that define when it falters, what it costs, or what it exposes, ensuring that power always has pressure attached. **Stunts** represent learned control or specialisation, allowing a character to bend their power in specific ways without removing risk.

Power Tier Costs

Tier	Name	Cost	Total Cost (to reach this tier)
1	Basic	1 point	1
2	Prime	2 points	3
3	Epic	3 points	6
4	Cosmic	4 points	10

Each Superpower has a Skill Level as well. This is rolled with an appropriate attribute to not only decide how powerful the effect is, but how precise the effect is. To be effective you need power, but you also need control.

A 1 Success Basic Blast is very different to a 1 Success Epic Blast

Starting Power Budgets

Grounded Campaign: Street Defenders

4 points

4 Basic

or 1 Prime and 2 Basic

No Epic or Cosmic

Low Power games are about **protecting places, not reshaping systems**. Characters operate at street level, where crime, corruption, and everyday harm are the primary antagonists. Their powers, if present at all, are subtle, unreliable, or narrowly focused. The city still works, institutions still function, and violence has consequences that ripple outward through families, neighbourhoods, and reputations. The drama comes from choosing what can be saved and what must be endured. In these games, power is personal and costly; being known is often more dangerous than being strong.

Standard Campaign: Guardians of a City

6 points

1 Prime and 3 Basic

2 Prime

1 Epic

Characters are dangerous but still containable

Standard games expand the scope from streets to **districts and cities**. Characters are no longer just reacting to crime; they are contending with organised threats, entrenched power structures, and crises that strain civic systems. Their abilities allow them to intervene decisively, but not without trade-offs. Authorities may cooperate, resist, or exploit them, and public perception becomes a meaningful force. These stories ask what it means to *hold responsibility* without authority. Power here is visible enough to inspire hope or fear, but not enough to escape accountability.

High-Impact Campaign: Strategic Actors

9 points

1 Epic + 1 Prime

or 2 Epic (with lots of Limits)

No Cosmic without GM approval

High Impact games treat powered characters as **strategic factors** in regional or national conflicts. The antagonists are no longer gangs or syndicates, but networks, states, ideologies, and mass movements. When characters act, markets react, borders shift, and institutions reconfigure around them. Their presence accelerates events rather than resolving them. These stories explore escalation, deterrence, and unintended consequences. Power at this level stops being heroic and becomes political. The question is not “can they stop this?”, but “what do they trigger by trying?

Mythic / Collapse Campaign: Forces of History

10+ points

Cosmic powers allowed

World consequences expected

Characters are no longer deniable

Mythic or Collapse games step outside human-scale conflict entirely. Characters are no longer defending cities or influencing nations; they are **reshaping eras**. Their actions fracture myths, collapse states, and alter the underlying assumptions of the world. Antagonists are existential: extinction, entropy, cosmic systems, or the consequences of power itself. In these games, traditional morality gives way to legacy. Victory is not measured in lives saved, but in what remains when the dust settles. Power here is no longer about control, but about **what kind of world is allowed to continue**.

ARMOUR

Supernatural resilience and damage negation

ARMOUR represents the ability to absorb, deflect, or ignore incoming harm. It may manifest as hardened flesh, energy fields, kinetic dampening, or spatial distortion. ARMOUR reduces damage but does not prevent impact, stress, or escalation.

BASIC — Hardened Form

You are resistant to conventional harm.

- Ignore small-arms fire and melee weapons
- Minor impacts cause little lasting injury
- Environmental hazards are reduced

Protection: Negates most light weapons and hazards (Armour 3)
Threats: Heavy weapons and sustained fire remain dangerous

Limits: Impact still causes pain, disorientation, or stress.

PRIME — Living Bulwark

You can endure military-grade force.

- Resist heavy weapons and explosives
- Withstand vehicle collisions and structural collapse
- Remain functional under sustained attack

Protection: Negates most conventional military weapons (Armour 6)
Threats: Anti-armour weapons and focused fire

EPIC — Unbreakable Presence

You endure forces that would destroy structures.

- Survive direct hits from heavy ordnance
- Stand within collapsing environments
- Function amid extreme heat, pressure, or force

Protection: Resists battlefield-level devastation
Threats: Superweapons, exotic forces, or prolonged assault (Armour 18)

COSMIC — Immutable Entity

Your resilience approaches absolute.

- Ignore most physical and energetic attacks
- Survive extreme cosmic or abstract forces
- Exist where matter and energy fail

Protection: Near-total immunity to conventional harm (Armour 24)
Threats: Conceptual, metaphysical, or narrative-scale effects

LIMITATIONS

These apply only or especially to Armour.

Soft Underbelly

Parts of the body are unprotected.

- 50% of hit locations bypass Armour entirely
- Often front/back split

Design Intent:
Armour should force positioning and tactics, not remove them.

Concussion Transfer

Even when Armour absorbs damage, force transfers to the body.

- If Armour absorbs more than half the incoming damage:
    - Suffer 1 Hit or 1 Stress (player choice)

Design Intent:
Armour blocks penetration, not physics.

Cumbersome

The armour interferes with movement.

- –2 to all Agility-based actions
- If reduced to 0 dice, the action cannot be attempted

Design Intent:
Armour trades survivability for mobility.

Visibility / Inhumanity (Implicit but Repeated)

Armour:

- Looks unnatural
- Is difficult or impossible to conceal
- Makes normal social integration harder

Design Intent:
Armour isolates the character socially.

STUNTS

Armour has two explicit Stunts:

Ricochet

- On a successful Stunt roll:
    - Each success removes 1 damage
    - Redirects it to another target

Meaning:
Armour becomes *active*, but only through skill investment.

Shield

- Use your body to protect others
- Excess damage transfers using vehicle “passenger” rules

Meaning:
Armour can protect others, but multiplies responsibility.

BLAST

Projected destructive energy

BLAST allows the character to project destructive force at range. This may manifest as heat, force, light, sound, radiation, or other directed phenomena, but its mechanical effect is raw damage applied at distance.

BLAST scales primarily through reach and area, not precision.

BASIC — Focused Discharge

You can project destructive force against single targets.

- Strike individual targets or small objects
- Breach light cover and unarmoured structures
- Suppress or drive back groups

Damage: Severe harm to a single human-scale target (Base Damage 2)
Range: Up to ~50 m
Area: Single target or very small radius

PRIME — Heavy Projection

You deliver battlefield-scale firepower.

- Destroy vehicles and fortified positions
- Affect multiple targets in a zone
- Deny areas through sustained fire

Damage: Lethal to vehicles and personnel (Base Damage 4)
Range: Up to ~500 m
Area: Small zone or focused cone

EPIC — Mass Destruction Event

Your attacks devastate terrain.

- Level buildings or installations
- Inflict mass casualties across wide areas
- Alter the battlefield through heat, pressure, or force

Damage: Structural devastation (Base Damage 8)
Range: Up to ~5 km
Area: Large zone or multiple connected zones

COSMIC — Annihilation Vector

Your projection exceeds conventional scale.

- Obliterate cities, fleets, or orbital targets
- Strike from extreme distance or orbit
- Damage or destabilise massive structures

Damage: Existential or extinction-level (Base Damage 16)
Range: Orbital, planetary, or undefined
Area: City-scale or greater

LIMITATIONS

Each Limitation taken should meaningfully shape how the BLAST is used, not just reduce frequency. Unless stated otherwise, each Limitation grants +1 Power Point / equivalent benefit at character creation.

Reload

After firing, the BLAST cannot be used again for 1d6 turns.

Charge-Up

BLAST requires one full action to charge before firing.

- The charge is obvious.
- If interrupted, the shot is lost.

Hot Spot

The BLAST can only be emitted from a single location (eyes, mouth, hands, chest, etc.).

- That location is obvious and vulnerable.
- The BLAST cannot be fired from elsewhere.

Lingering Signature

The BLAST leaves behind obvious after-effects.

- Fires burn
- Ice freezes
- Radiation sickens
- Force shatters structures

Unstable Output

Each time BLAST is used, roll 1d6.

- On a 1, the effect spreads, misfires, or escalates negatively.

Environmental Dependency

BLAST only functions under specific conditions.

Examples:

- Darkness
- Daylight
- Open air
- High humidity
- Presence of electricity or heat

Condition should apply 25–50% of the time.

Physical Toll

Using BLAST causes 1 Stress or 1 Hit (player choice), regardless of success.

Visible Transformation

When BLAST is used, the character visibly changes.

Examples:

- Glowing veins
- Burning eyes
- Cracking skin
- Distorted silhouette

STUNTS

Stunts require skill investment and represent learned control or specialisation.
They do not increase raw damage unless explicitly stated.

Area Effect

The BLAST affects a zone rather than a single target.

- All targets in the area are affected.
- Collateral damage is guaranteed.

Use: Crowd control, denial, devastation.

Suppression

Instead of precise damage, the BLAST pins targets.

- Double normal Rate of Fire or coverage
- Targets suffer penalties to movement and action

Use: Area denial, forcing movement.

Armour Piercing

On a successful stunt roll:

- Each success temporarily reduces the target's Armour by 50%
- Reduction applies only to this attack

Use: Anti-armour or escalation tool.

Pull Your Punch

With a successful stunt roll, you may:

- Precisely control damage
- Stop short of lethal force
- Avoid triggering Critical results

Use: Restraint, intimidation, capture.

Chain Effect

After striking the primary target, the BLAST may:

- Jump to an adjacent target or zone
- Deal reduced damage on the secondary hit

Use: Crowd fights, chaotic environments.

Focused Beam

Trade area for precision.

- Increase effective range
- Reduce collateral damage
- Target weak points or small objects

Use: Sniping, surgical destruction.

Overload

Once per session, you may:

- Increase BLAST damage or area by one tier
- Automatically generate a Complication

Use: Desperation, last resort.

FLIGHT

Self-propelled aerial movement and atmospheric control

FLIGHT allows the character to move freely through the air without external support. At higher tiers, flight ceases to be locomotion and becomes airspace dominance. FLIGHT does not grant safety. Altitude increases risk.

BASIC — Skyborne

You can lift yourself into the air under your own power.

- Hover, glide, and fly at low altitude
- Clear obstacles, buildings, and terrain
- Ignore most ground-based movement restrictions

Speed (Upper Range): ~100 km/h
Altitude: Up to ~1 km

Limits:
Take-off and landing require space or preparation.

PRIME — Supersonic Vector

You travel faster than most vehicles.

- Sustained high-speed flight
- Rapid pursuit or disengagement
- Operate effectively in storms and adverse conditions

Speed (Upper Range): Mach 1–2
Altitude: Up to ~15 km (jet altitude)

Limits:
Sonic booms, shockwaves, and visibility draw attention.

EPIC — Stratospheric Dominance

You command airspace across vast distances.

- Intercontinental travel without refuelling
- Operate at the edge of space
- Ignore most atmospheric hazards

Speed (Upper Range): Mach 5+
Altitude: Up to ~100 km (near-space)

Limits:
Your movement disrupts weather patterns and air traffic.

COSMIC — Void Ascendant

Flight is no longer bound to atmosphere.

- Operate in vacuum and orbital space
- Travel between celestial bodies
- Manoeuvre independent of gravity

Speed (Upper Range): Relativistic or undefined
Altitude: Orbital and beyond

Limits:
Navigation and re-entry become narrative challenges.

LIMITATIONS

Each Limitation should materially affect where, when, or how safely FLIGHT can be used.
Unless your SRD says otherwise, each Limitation grants +1 Power Point / equivalent ben**efit** at character creation.

Winged

Flight requires physical wings or extensions.

- Wings must be deployed to fly
- Damage or restraint prevents flight
- Concealment is difficult or impossible

Stabilisation Required

Fine control depends on stabilisers, implants, or constant adjustment.

- All aerial manoeuvres suffer a penalty under stress
- Turbulence, damage, or interference worsens control

Hot Landing

Landing is difficult and dangerous.

- Landing at speed requires a roll
- Failure causes impact damage or Complications

Atmospheric Dependence

Flight relies on air density, pressure, or weather.

Examples:

- Cannot function in vacuum
- Weak in storms or thin air
- Requires thermal or wind currents

Momentum Carryover

Stopping suddenly is dangerous.

- Rapid deceleration causes Harm or Stress
- Tight spaces are hazardous at speed

Visible Transit

Flight leaves unmistakable signs.

Examples:

- Sonic booms
- Contrails
- Light distortion
- Weather disruption

Altitude Stress

High altitude flight strains the body or mind.

- Extended high-altitude use causes Stress, fatigue, or disorientation
- Failure may force descent

Limited Payload

Carrying others or heavy objects is difficult.

- Each additional passenger reduces speed or control
- Overloading causes instability or forced landing

STUNTS

Aerial Dodge

Use three-dimensional movement to evade attacks.

- Gain an additional +2 bonus to evade ranged attacks while airborne
- Requires space to manoeuvre

Use: Surviving concentrated fire.

Shockwave

At PRIME or higher speeds:

- Create a sonic or pressure wave
- Targets in the area must resist disorientation or panic

Use: Area denial, crowd disruption.

Precision Hover

Maintain perfect position despite wind or movement. No rolls required.

- Hover steadily in confined or unstable spaces
- Cancel penalties from turbulence

Use: Recon, extraction, controlled insertions.

Airlift

Carry additional people or cargo.

- Each Success allows one additional passenger at full speed
- Beyond this, speed drops sharply

Use: Rescue, evacuation, transport.

Dive Strike

Convert altitude and speed into force.

- Increase impact or melee damage after a descent; +2 per tier
- Landing Complications are likely

Use: Shock assaults.

Slipstream

Manipulate airflow to assist others.

- Reduce penalties by 2 levels for nearby flyers or aircraft in sync
- Create safe corridors through hostile airspace

Use: Escort, formation movement.

Dead Drop

Cut power mid-flight and recover just before impact.

- Avoid detection temporarily
- Failure causes catastrophic fall

Use: Ambush, evasion, infiltration.

High-Altitude Ghost

At extreme altitude, you are difficult to detect.

- Radars, optics, and sensors suffer a -3 penalty
- Requires sustained control

Use: Strategic movement, observation.

MIGHT

Superhuman physical strength and applied force

MIGHT represents the ability to exert force beyond human limits. It governs lifting, striking, breaking, and physical dominance. As MIGHT increases, strength ceases to be muscular and becomes structural.

MIGHT does not remove Complications; it increases their scale.

BASIC — Breaker of Men

You possess strength far beyond human capability.

- Overpower multiple opponents physically
- Break doors, walls, and light fortifications
- Throw heavy objects as weapons

Lift (Upper Range): ~1–5 tons (Cars, concrete blocks, small vehicles)

Base Melee Damage: 4

PRIME — Engine of Destruction

You operate at vehicle and infrastructure scale.

- Tear apart vehicles and reinforced structures
- Cause shockwaves and ground fractures
- Conventional weapons struggle to restrain you

Lift (Upper Range): ~20–50 tons (Tanks, small buildings, aircraft sections)

Base Melee Damage: 6

EPIC — Living Catastrophe

Your strength reshapes the battlefield.

- Alter terrain through force alone
- Overmatch military formations
- Destroy hardened installations

Lift (Upper Range): ~500–1,000 tons (Bridges, warships, major structures)

Base Melee Damage: 8

COSMIC — Axis of Ruin

Your strength defies physical intuition.

- Exert force across massive or abstract scales
- Damage geological or planetary structures
- Apply force without clear physical leverage

Lift (Upper Range): Indeterminate (Tectonic plates, orbital structures, planetary masses)

Base Melee Damage: 10

LIMITATIONS

Each Limitation should meaningfully affect **control, collateral, or consequence**.
Unless stated otherwise, each Limitation grants **+1 Power Point** (or equivalent benefit) at character creation.

Collateral Spiral

When you use MIGHT to solve a problem, something else breaks.

- Every major use automatically generates a Complication.
- At **Epic or Cosmic**, the Complication affects the wider environment.

Unstable Control

Fine control is difficult under stress.

- Precision tasks require a roll.
- Failure results in damage to the object, environment, or nearby characters.

Grounded Power

Your strength depends on leverage or contact.

- You must be braced, grounded, or anchored to exert full force.
- Reduced effectiveness while airborne, falling, or restrained.

Visible Transformation

Using MIGHT visibly alters your body.

Examples:

- Distended musculature
- Cracking skin
- Gravitational distortion
- Shockwave ripples

Momentum Transfer

Force carries consequences.

- Striking or throwing objects causes knockback, recoil, or structural collapse.
- Referees should apply environmental damage freely.

Physical Toll

Your body absorbs the cost.

- Each significant use causes 1 Stress or 1 Hit (player choice).
- Cannot be ignored or mitigated by ARMOUR.

Escalation Trigger

Authorities respond to your presence.

- Each overt use increases the scale or speed of response.
- Applies even if no one is directly harmed.

STUNTS

Stunts represent learned restraint, technique, or controlled escalation.
They do not increase raw strength; they shape *how* it is applied.

Precision Break

You can destroy part of an object without collapsing the whole.

- Reduce collateral damage when breaching or dismantling.
- Failure still causes damage.

Use: Controlled entry, sabotage.

Shock Impact

Convert raw force into an area effect.

- Targets in the immediate area must resist being knocked down or stunned.
- Environmental damage is likely.

Use: Crowd control, disruption.

Grappling Dominance

When grappling or restraining:

- Opponents lose actions or suffer penalties unless they overpower you.
- Larger targets remain dangerous.

Use: Capture, containment.

Anchor Hold

You can hold or restrain massive forces.

- Prevent movement, collapse, or momentum.
- Success holds; failure causes catastrophic release.

Use: Stopping trains, holding bridges, resisting pulls.

Throwing Weapon

You may hurl large objects accurately.

- Extend effective range for thrown objects.
- Misses cause severe collateral damage.

Use: Improvised artillery.

Last Stand

Once per session, when overwhelmed:

- Ignore penalties from injury or stress for one scene.
- After the scene, suffer severe fatigue or fallout.

Use: Desperation, final pushes.

Controlled Lift

Carry or support heavy loads without collapse.

- Reduce environmental damage while lifting or supporting.
- Does not remove strain or time pressure.

Use: Rescue, evacuation.

Overcommit

Once per session, you may:

- Temporarily treat your MIGHT as one tier higher
- Automatically generate a major Complication

Use: Breaking points, no-return moments.

MATTER CONTROL

MATTER CONTROL allows the character to manipulate non-living matter: earth, stone, metal, water, and other physical materials. The power governs shape, movement, cohesion, and state, not spontaneous creation. At higher tiers, control shifts from handling matter to overwriting how it behaves.

A character specialises in one material domain:

- Earth / Stone
- Water / Ice
- Metal / Magnetism
- Synthetic Materials

BASIC — Material Shaper

You can manipulate nearby matter in limited, direct ways.

- Shape, move, or compact loose material
- Raise barriers, tools, or simple structures
- Manipulate small volumes of water or metal
- Exert basic magnetic influence on ferrous objects

Scale: Human-sized volumes
Range: Up to ~10 m

PRIME — Field Manipulator

You exert sustained control over substantial matter.

- Move earth, water, or metal in bulk
- Bend, pull, or repel large metallic objects
- Reshape structures or terrain during a scene
- Generate sustained material effects (walls, flows, restraints)

Scale: Vehicle-sized volumes
Range: Up to ~100 m

EPIC — Environmental Architect

You dominate the physical environment.

- Reshape terrain, rivers, or urban areas
- Collapse or raise large structures
- Control massive metallic masses or magnetic fields
- Alter material states (solid ↔ liquid under pressure)

Scale: City-block scale
Range: Up to ~1 km

COSMIC — Fundamental Rewriter

You alter how matter behaves at a conceptual level.

- Affect tectonic structures, oceans, or planetary fields
- Override material limits such as hardness or cohesion
- Exert control through indirect presence or intention

Scale: Regional to planetary
Range: Narrative or planetary scale

LIMITATIONS

Each Limitation should meaningfully constrain scope, precision, or fallout.
Unless your SRD states otherwise, each Limitation grants +1 Power Point (or equivalent benefit) at character creation.

Mass Inertia

Large volumes resist change.

- The greater the mass affected, the slower or less precise the control.
- Sudden manipulation of massive matter creates Complications automatically.

Line of Influence

You must maintain a clear path of effect.

- Barriers, distance, or interference disrupt control.
- Losing line of influence causes effects to destabilise or collapse.

Cascade Failure

Changes propagate beyond intent.

- Any major alteration risks secondary effects:
    - Cave-ins
    - Flooding
    - Structural collapse
- Referees should escalate consequences naturally.

Material Lock

You can only control one material type at a time.

- Switching materials requires a pause or roll.
- Mixed-material environments complicate control.

Environmental Dependency

Your power relies on the presence of suitable matter.

- Urban vs wilderness contexts matter.
- Sparse environments severely limit options.

Physical Feedback

Force transfers back to you.

- Manipulating dense or resistant matter causes **Stress or Harm**.
- Cannot be negated by ARMOUR.

Visible Distortion

Controlled matter behaves unnaturally.

Examples:

- Grinding sounds
- Magnetic arcs
- Water flowing uphill
- Stone flexing like clay

Escalation Marker

Large-scale manipulation triggers attention.

- Authorities, sensors, or observers respond.
- Applies even if no one is directly harmed.

STUNTS

Precision Sculpt

Perform fine, delicate manipulation.

- Shape locks, supports, channels, or tools.
- Failure causes jams, weakness, or collapse.

Use: Breaching, construction, sabotage.

Reinforce

Strengthen existing structures or terrain.

- Increase durability temporarily.
- When the effect ends, stress rebounds.

Use: Fortification, protection, delay.

Grasping Terrain

Animate the environment to restrain.

- Stone, metal, or water restrains targets.
- Breaking free damages the surroundings.

Use: Crowd control, capture.

Flow Redirection

Redirect movement through the environment.

- Divert water, debris, or falling structures.
- Requires anticipation; late reactions escalate damage.

Use: Disaster control, battlefield shaping.

Magnetic Snare

Specialisation: Metal / Magnetism

- Pull, pin, or disarm metallic objects or foes.
- Overuse causes interference or overload.

Use: Anti-weapon control.

Terrain Surge

Release stored force.

- Trigger a controlled collapse, wave, or upheaval.
- Area damage and Complications guaranteed.

Use: Denial, shock action.

Sustained Form

Maintain a complex structure over time.

- Walls, bridges, dams, or platforms persist.
- Dividing attention weakens all maintained forms.

Use: Engineering solutions under pressure.

Overwrite Properties

Once per session, temporarily ignore one material property:

- Hardness
- Brittleness
- Conductivity
- Cohesion

When the effect ends, consequences apply.

Use: Breaking the impossible.

ENERGY CONTROL

ENERGY CONTROL allows the character to sense, shape, redirect, and amplify existing energy. This includes heat, cold, electricity, light, radiation, kinetic force, and similar phenomena. It does not create matter, and it does not replace BLAST; it governs how energy behaves, not simply how much damage it causes.

A character focuses on a dominant energy type:

- Thermal (Heat / Cold)
- Electrical / Electromagnetic
- Radiant (Light / Radiation)
- Kinetic / Vibrational

BASIC — Energy Handler

You can manipulate small amounts of ambient energy.

- Heat or cool objects and areas
- Disrupt or enhance electrical systems
- Redirect light, sound, or kinetic force locally
- Safely dissipate dangerous energy buildup

Scale: Room-sized effects
Range: Up to ~10 m

PRIME — Field Regulator

You exert sustained control over energetic systems.

- Generate localised energy fields
- Redirect large electrical or thermal flows
- Drain, store, or release energy within a scene
- Counter or dampen other energy-based effects

Scale: Building-sized effects
Range: Up to ~100 m

EPIC — Force Dominator

You command energy at environmental scale.

- Control storms, power grids, or massive heat exchange
- Weaponise ambient energy without direct projection
- Convert one energy form into another
- Overwhelm conventional containment systems

Scale: City-block to district scale
Range: Up to ~1 km

COSMIC — Universal Conductor

Energy obeys you as a principle rather than a resource.

- Suppress or unleash catastrophic energy events
- Operate across vacuum, atmosphere, and extreme conditions
- Affect energetic balance on planetary or greater scales

Scale: Regional to planetary
Range: Narrative or planetary

LIMITATIONS

Each Limitation should materially constrain availability, stability, or fallout.
Unless your SRD states otherwise, each Limitation grants +1 Power Point (or equivalent benefit) at character creation.

Source Dependent

You require existing energy to manipulate.

- Sparse environments reduce effectiveness.
- Total absence of energy prevents use entirely.

Overload Backlash

Excess energy must go somewhere.

- Large-scale effects generate Stress, Harm, or environmental discharge.
- Failure causes uncontrolled release.

Conversion Loss

Energy changes are inefficient.

- Converting one energy type to another loses potency.
- Lost energy manifests as heat, radiation, or noise.

Interference Field

Other energy sources disrupt control.

- Competing fields, tech, or powers impose penalties.
- Crowded or hostile environments complicate precision.

Cascade Risk

Energy effects propagate.

- Large manipulations trigger chain reactions:
    - Fires
    - Blackouts
    - Explosions
- Secondary effects are the Referee's tool.

Physical Feedback

Your body absorbs part of the load.

- Major uses inflict **Stress or Harm** (player choice).
- Cannot be negated by ARMOUR.

Visible Phenomena

Energy control is obvious.

Examples:

- Arcing electricity
- Heat shimmer
- Blinding light
- Harmonic vibration

Escalation Trigger

Major energy manipulation draws attention.

- Sensors, authorities, or observers respond rapidly.
- Applies even without visible damage.

STUNTS

Stunts represent learned regulation, redirection, or controlled release.
They do not increase raw scale; they allow choice of outcome.

Energy Sink

Absorb incoming energy safely.

- Reduce or negate energy-based attacks.
- Stored energy must be released or dissipated later.

Use: Defence, containment.

Redirection

Change the path of energy.

- Redirect attacks, lightning, heat, or force.
- Poor angles cause spillover damage.

Use: Tactical defence, chaos control.

Field Dampening

Suppress energy in an area.

- Reduce fire, electricity, radiation, or vibration.
- Effects rebound when suppression ends.

Use: Control zones, emergency response.

Conversion Burst

Release stored or redirected energy.

- Convert absorbed energy into a single effect.
- Area damage and Complications likely.

Use: Counterattack, emergency escalation.

Precision Channel

Apply energy with fine control.

- Power delicate systems without overload.
- Failure causes burnout or short circuits.

Use: Repair, infiltration, technical problem-solving.

Resonance Lock

Stabilise an energetic system.

- Prevent meltdown, explosion, or collapse.
- Requires sustained focus.

Use: Crisis containment.

Chain Reaction

Exploit unstable systems.

- Trigger cascading failures intentionally.
- Effects spread beyond the initial target.

Use: Sabotage, denial.

Overclock

Once per session, you may:

- Treat ENERGY CONTROL as one tier higher
- Automatically generate a major Complication

Use: Breaking points, last-resort intervention.